DC FINEST

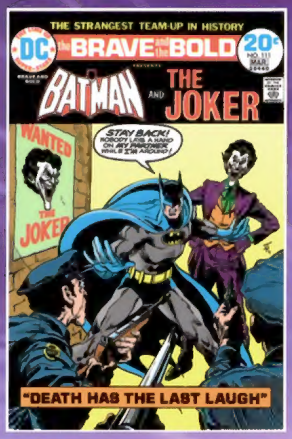
THE JOKER™

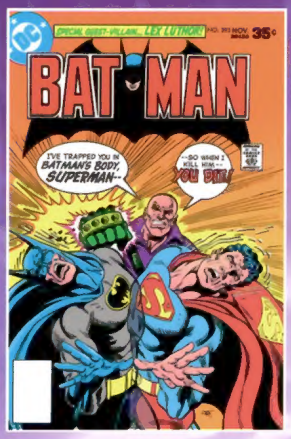
THE LAST HA HA

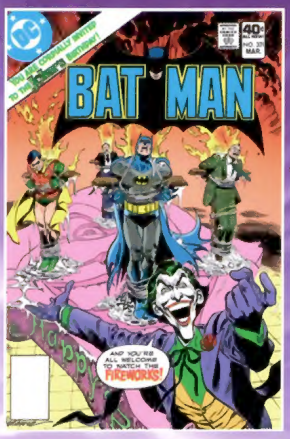
DENNIS O'NEIL | BOB HANEY | ELLIOT S! MAGGIN

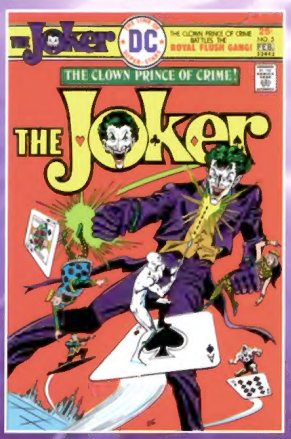
PRESENTING DC's FINEST STORIES!

Each DC Finest volume features key moments in the adventures of the greatest characters in comics. Written and drawn by classic creators, these are the stories that transformed the DC Universe forever! *DC Finest: The Joker: The Last Ha Ha* features these incredible issues and more!









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CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE?

After taking a cartoonish turn in the Silver Age, The Joker returned to his darker, more homicidal roots in the Bronze Age, staging capers that were twistedly humorous but still had lethal consequences.

This collection showcases the Clown Prince of Crime back in deadly form against his archnemesis, Batman, in tales such as "The Joker's Five-Way Revenge!" by Dennis O'Neil and Neal Adams and "The Laughing Fish" by Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers, and Terry Austin. Also included in this volume is the 1975 *Joker* series with the previously unpublished issue #10, which was only available in omnibus format prior to this edition.

DC Finest: The Joker: The Last Ha Ha collects stories published between December 1969 and September 1981 from *Batman* #251, #260, #286, #291-294, and #321; *The Brave and the Bold* #111, #118, #129-130, and #141; *Detective Comics* #475-476 and #504; *The Joker* #1-10; *Justice League of America* #77; and backup stories from *Wonder Woman* #280-283.

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DC FINEST

THE JOKER

THE LAST HA HA

NEAL ADAMS
collection cover artist

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SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER
By special arrangement with the Jerry Siegel family

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DC FINEST: THE JOKER: THE LAST HA HA

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Writers: Martin Pasko and Paul Kupperberg
Penciller: Irv Novick
Inker: Vince Colletta
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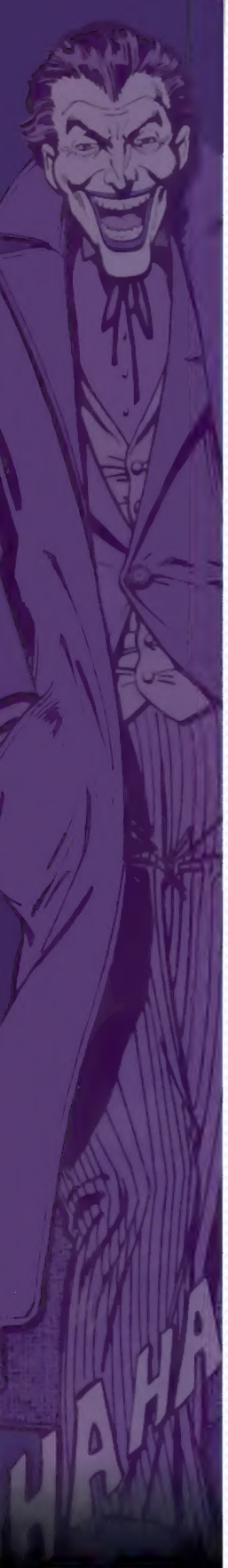

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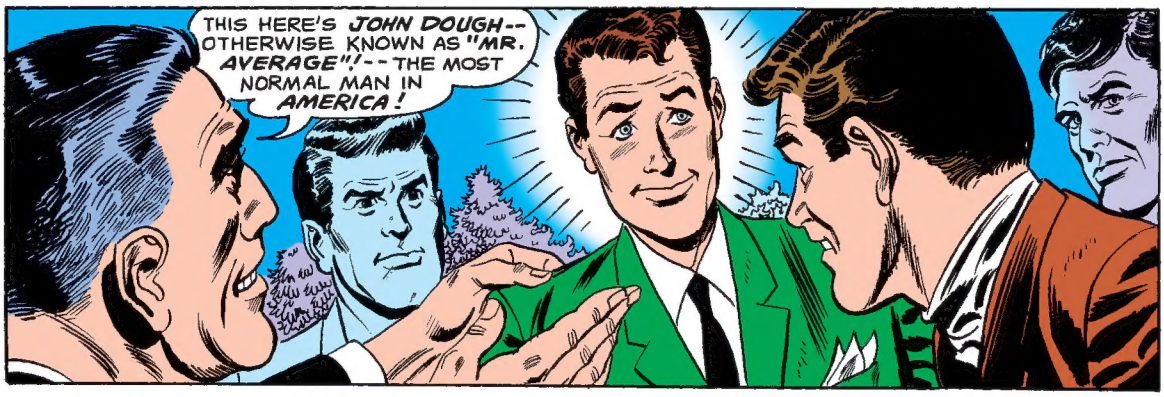
DC FINEST

SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS
The WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES!
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DEC.
NO. 77
SUPERMAN
BATMAN
FLASH
BLACK CANARY
GREEN LANTERN
ATOM
GREEN ARROW
YOU FOOLS! I AM THE LAST ONE YOU'D SUSPECT OF...
BETRAYING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!

IT BEGINS WITH AN ANGRY SHOUT ONE PLEASANT AUTUMN EVE...
THERE HE IS!
LET'S KNOCK SOME NORMAL INTO HIM!
YEAH--! THE GUY WHO PALS AROUND WITH FREAKS!
WHAT'S BUGGING YOU GUYS--IIIII!
I DON'T--UNN--UNDERSTAND! WHY--
WHY? 'CAUSE YOU HANG OUT WITH A BUNCHA SUPER-HEROES, IS WHY!
NOW, NOW! THERE'S NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE--
--AT LEAST NOT YET!
TH-THANKS, MISTER! ONLY... WHO AM I THANKING?
YA DON'T RECOGNIZE HIM?
S-245



A SIMPLE, APPARENTLY UNPLANNED MEETING BETWEEN SNAPPER CARR, COLLEGIATE MASCOT OF THE--

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA

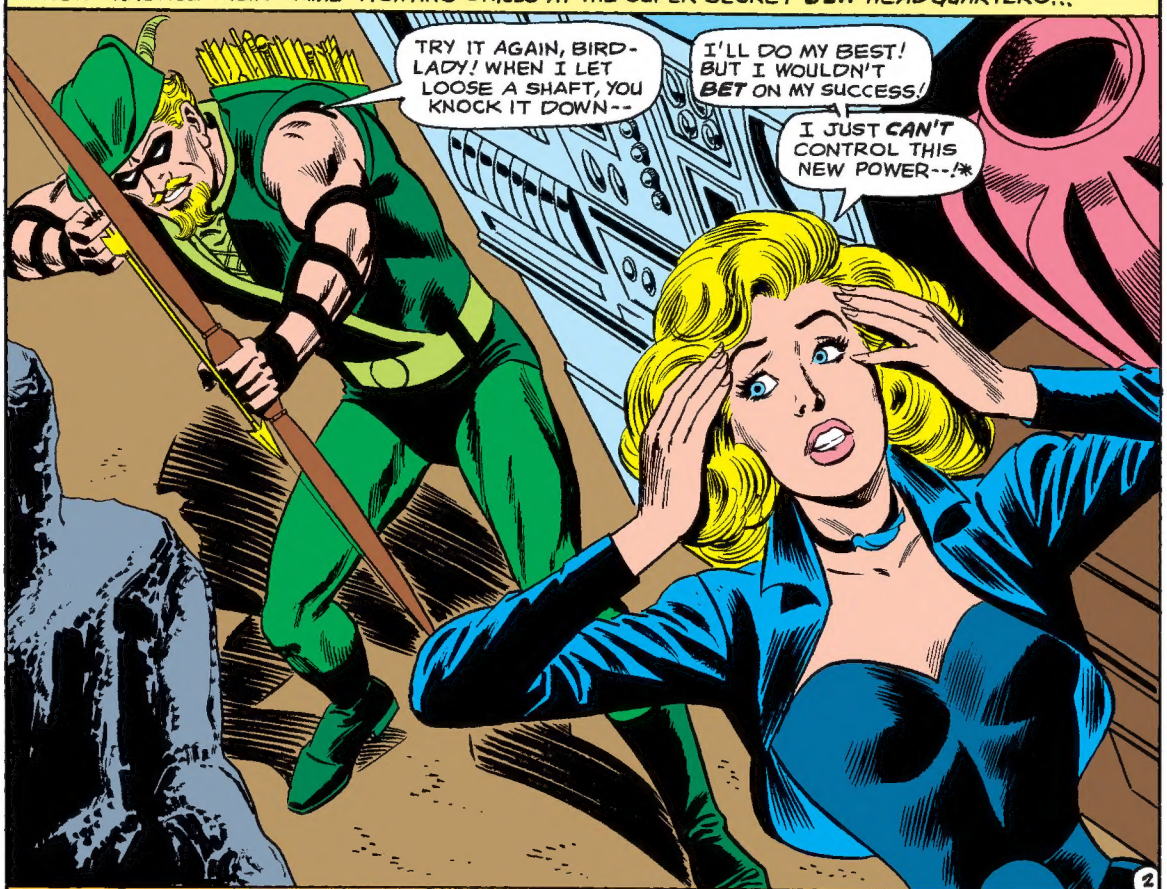
--AND THE STAGGERINGLY UNSPECTACULAR JOHN DOUGH... A MEETING THAT WILL HAVE DIRE CONSEQUENCES... FOR SOON, THE LOYAL TEEN-AGER WILL ANSWER TO THE NAME...

"SNAPPER CARR--SUPER-TRAITOR!"

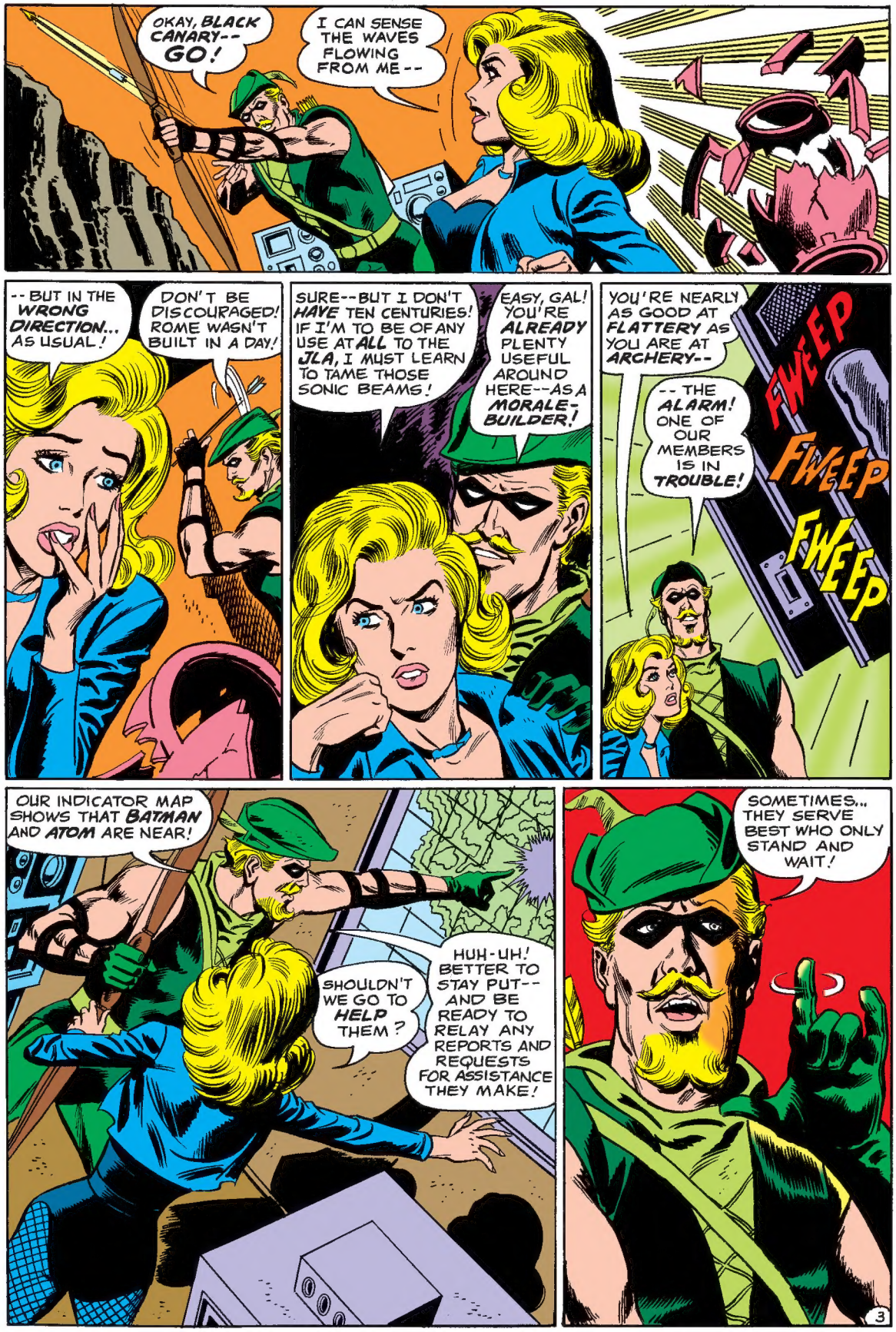
STORY: DENNY O'NEIL

ART: DICK DILLIN & JOE GIELLA

EVEN AS SNAPPER AND "MR. AVERAGE" BEGIN THEIR FATEFUL ENCOUNTER, BLACK CANARY AND GREEN ARROW PRACTICE THEIR CRIME-FIGHTING SKILLS AT THE SUPER-SECRET JLA HEADQUARTERS...

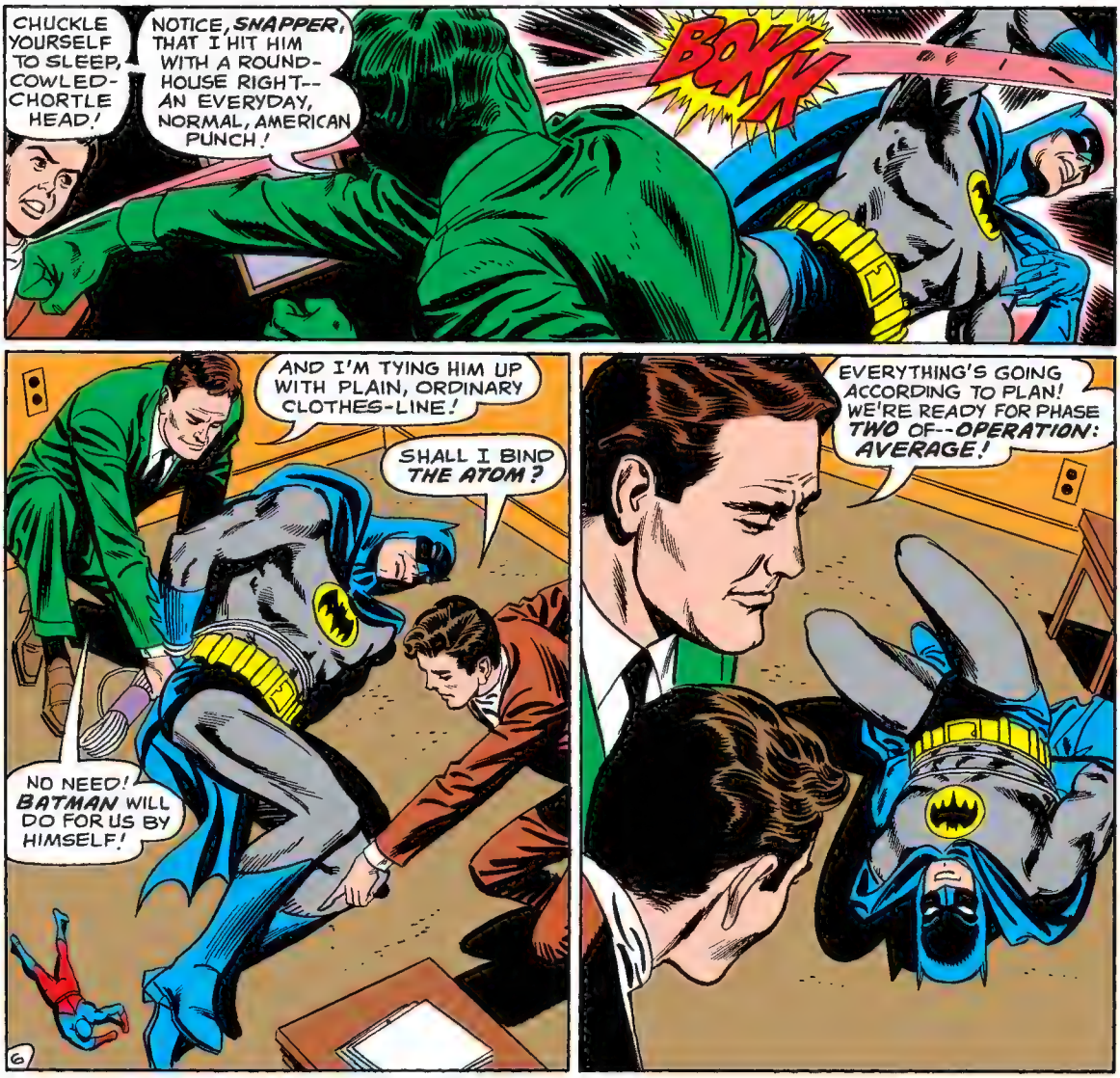


*NOTE: THE JLA'S BEWITCHING BLONDE ACQUIRED THE ABILITY TO GENERATE ULTRA-SONIC ENERGY-WAVES AS A RESULT OF HER ENCOUNTER WITH AQUARIUS--THE ALIEN RESPONSIBLE FOR HER HUSBAND'S DEATH!


OKAY, BLACK CANARY-- GO!
I CAN SENSE THE WAVES FLOWING FROM ME--
--BUT IN THE WRONG DIRECTION... AS USUAL!
DON'T BE DISCOURAGED! ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY!
SURE--BUT I DON'T HAVE TEN CENTURIES! IF I'M TO BE OF ANY USE AT ALL TO THE JLA, I MUST LEARN TO TAME THOSE SONIC BEAMS!
EASY, GAL! YOU'RE ALREADY PLENTY USEFUL AROUND HERE--AS A MORALE-BUILDER!
YOU'RE NEARLY AS GOOD AT FLATTERY AS YOU ARE AT ARCHERY--
-- THE ALARM! ONE OF OUR MEMBERS IS IN TROUBLE!
FWEEP
FWEEP
FWEEP
OUR INDICATOR MAP SHOWS THAT BATMAN AND ATOM ARE NEAR!
SHOULDN'T WE GO TO HELP THEM?
HUH-UH! BETTER TO STAY PUT-- AND BE READY TO RELAY ANY REPORTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE THEY MAKE!
SOMETIMES... THEY SERVE BEST WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT!
3

AND WHO SOUNDED THE ALARM? NONE OTHER THAN OUR YOUNG MR. CARR... WHO AWAITS THE ARRIVAL OF HIS FORMER ALLIES UNEASILY...
I DON'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT THIS, MR. DOUGH! THE JLA HAS BEEN GENEROUS TO ME...
DUTY CAN BE PAINFUL, MY BOY! REMEMBER--YOU'RE ACTING FOR THE GREATER GOOD... FOR THE GLORY OF THE AVERAGE!
THAT BATMAN FELLOW AND THE SMALL ONE--THE ATOM--ARE PERFORMING AT A CHARITY SHOW A FEW MILES AWAY!
THEY SHOULD ARRIVE ANY SECOND... AH! HERE THEY COME!
SNAPPER! DID YOU CALL US?
WHAT'S THE SQUAWK, SNAP? I DON'T SEE ANY NEED FOR A PAIR OF CARD-CARRYING SUPER-HEROES...
THESE FLOWERS! THERE'S SOMETHING... ODD... ABOUT THEM!
NOT THAT I CAN SEE! AND EVEN IF THERE IS, THAT'S NO REASON TO USE THE EMERGENCY SUMMONS...
SNAPPER, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO BE SO IRRESPONSIBLE... HUNH?!?
SOME KINDA... GAS--!
FOOF!
4

L-L-L-LAUGHING... HEE HEE... G-GAS...
IS... HA... HA... THIS YOUR IDEA OF A... J-JOKE--?
STRIKE THE SMALL ONE, SNAPPER-- AS I ASKED!
YES SIR, MR. DOUGH!
YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT, ATOM, BUT YOU DESERVE THIS-- FOR BEING DIFFERENT!
SLAPP
HA HA UNGHH!
W- WON'T-- HEH HEH-- LET YOU G-GET AWAY...
A FEEBLE SWING, BATMAN--! I ALWAYS SUSPECTED YOUR PHYSICAL PROWESS WAS DUE TO LUCK MORE THAN SKILL!
MANY TIMES FORTUNE HAS FAVORED YOU! NOW-- IT HAS TAKEN MY SIDE!
CHUD
AH HA HA
LAUGHING SO HARD...I CAN'T GET COORDINATED!
5

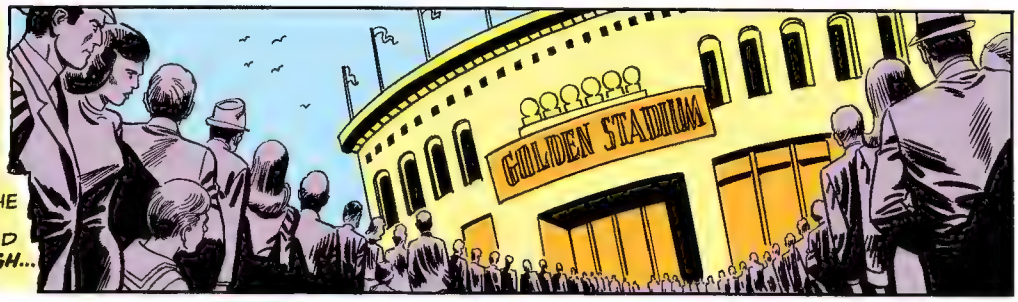

CHUCKLE YOURSELF TO SLEEP, COWLED-CHORTLE HEAD!
NOTICE, SNAPPER, THAT I HIT HIM WITH A ROUND-HOUSE RIGHT--AN EVERYDAY, NORMAL, AMERICAN PUNCH!
BOK!!
AND I'M TYING HIM UP WITH PLAIN, ORDINARY CLOTHES-LINE!
SHALL I BIND THE ATOM?
NO NEED! BATMAN WILL DO FOR US BY HIMSELF!
EVERYTHING'S GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN! WE'RE READY FOR PHASE TWO OF--OPERATION: AVERAGE!

SLOWLY, THE GOTHAM CRIME-CRUSHER RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS...AND HAZILY SEES THE SMUG FACE OF THE MAN CALLED JOHN DOUGH...
HA! YOU'VE COME AROUND AT LAST--YOU GREY GALOOMPH!
DON'T BOTHER TO TALK, MASKED MISFIT! JUST LISTEN--
I'VE HIDDEN TV CAMERAS IN SEVERAL PLACES--SO YOU CAN WATCH AS I SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROY THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!
AND WHEN THE REST OF THE COSTUMED CRETINS ARE CRUMBLED, I'LL RETURN TO FINISH YOU!
BY THE WAY--ESCAPE IS HOPELESS! I'VE TAKEN YOUR UTILITY BELT--AND THE STEEL WALLS OF THIS CHAMBER ARE THREE FEET THICK!
AS SOON AS I LEAVE, A PUMP WILL FILL THIS CHAMBER WITH POISON GAS! THAT'S WHY YOU'RE WEARING AN OXYGEN RIG...
WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO DIE BEFORE I'M READY! HEE ... HEE...
HE MAY HAVE OUTSMARTED HIMSELF--WHOEVER HE IS! HE'S LEFT ME A POSSIBLE WAY OUT...
...BUT IT'LL TAKE TIME--WHICH I CAN'T AFFORD TO SQUANDER...
THOSE NOZZLES--STARTING TO SQUIRT OUT DEADLY FUMES!
SSSSSS
7

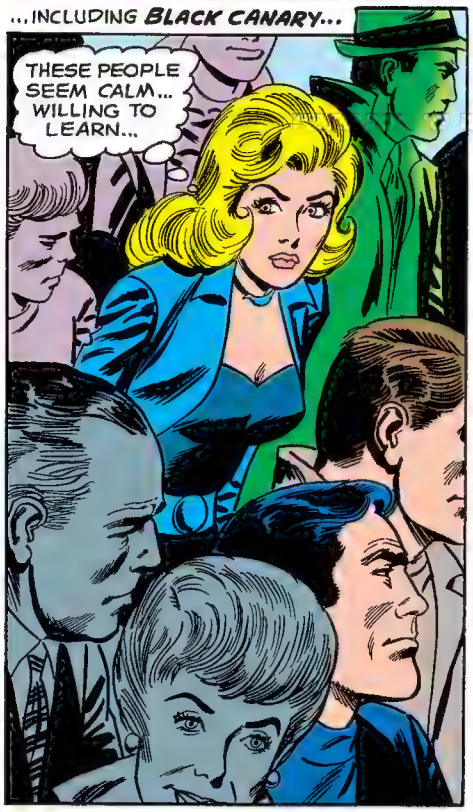
AT THAT INSTANT, IN JLA HEADQUARTERS, THE MIGHTY MITE IS CONCLUDING HIS TALE OF WOE...
...AND THEN SNAPPER--OUR BUDDY--WALLOPED ME! WHEN I CAME TO--HE, BATMAN AND THAT DOUGH CHARACTER WERE GONE!
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! WHY WOULD SNAPPER...
I MIGHT BE ABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, FLASH!
THIS DOUGH IS GETTING POPULAR.. IT COULD BE THAT SNAPPER HAS SWALLOWED HIS LINE, JUST AS MANY OTHERS HAVE...
BUT WHY ATTACK US?
DAILY PLA
DOUGH GAINS FOLLOWERS!
"MR. AVERAGE" VOWS RETURN TO "NORMALCY"!
WELL... WE'RE NOT VERY "NORMAL"!
TRUE, GREEN LANTERN! BUT WE'VE ALWAYS USED OUR EXTRAORDINARY POWERS FOR JUSTICE!
STILL... THESE ARE UNUSUAL TIMES! PEOPLE READ ABOUT WARS...RIOTS... THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING--
NEITHER CAN I! AND I DON'T BLAME THEM FOR MISTRUSTING ANYTHING THAT'S STRANGE--INCLUDING SUPER-HEROES!
BALONEY! LOOK, THE HUMAN RACE HAS PROGRESSED SO FAR AS IT HAS BECAUSE MEN AND WOMEN WERE BRAVE ENOUGH TO ACCEPT THE DIFFERENT--AND...
YOU'LL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN YOUR THEORY IN DETAIL, GREEN ARROW!
8

JOHN DOUGH HAS INVITED US TO A RALLY TONIGHT! HE SAYS WE'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO GIVE OUR SIDE OF THE STORY...
BATMAN! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN
OH...I HAD A LONG TALK WITH DOUGH! HE APOLOGIZES FOR SNAPPER'S SLUGGING YOU...SAYS THE KID GOT CARRIED AWAY!
THE RALLY WILL BE HELD AT THE GOLDEN STADIUM! THESE PASSES WILL GET US PAST THE GUARDS!
AS IF ANYONE COULD MISTAKE US FOR GATE-CRASHERS--
DO YOU HAVE A PASS FOR ME?
UH...NO! I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO... UH...SIT IN THE AUDIENCE, YOUNG LADY!
FUNNY...HE'S LOOKING AT ME AS THOUGH I WERE A COMPLETE STRANGER!
DOUGH SEEMS STARTLED BY BLACK CANARY!--OF COURSE! WE HAVEN'T FORMALLY ANNOUNCED HER MEMBERSHIP YET!
HE SURE LOOKS UNCANNILY LIKE ME IN THAT MASK--!
GOT TO FREE MYSELF! WARN THEM!
I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO... STRETCH... THIS CLOTHES-LINE...GET SOME SLACK...
9

WHILE BATMAN STRUGGLES, THOUSANDS THRONG TO GOLDEN STADIUM, ANTICIPATING THE DEBATE BETWEEN THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND JOHN DOUGH...

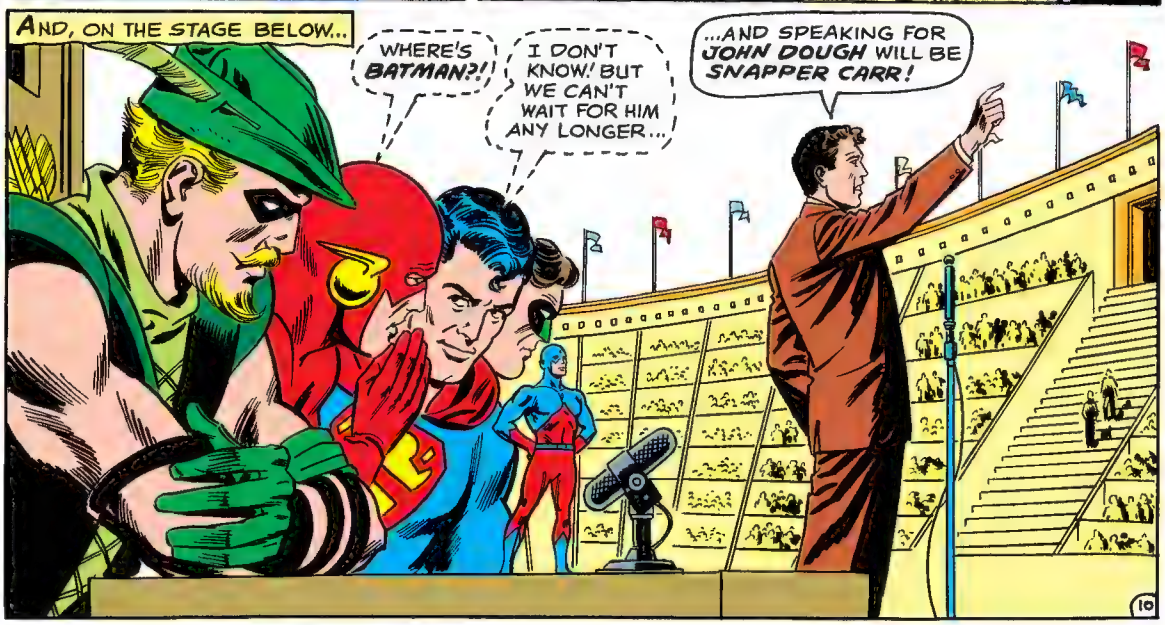


...INCLUDING BLACK CANARY...

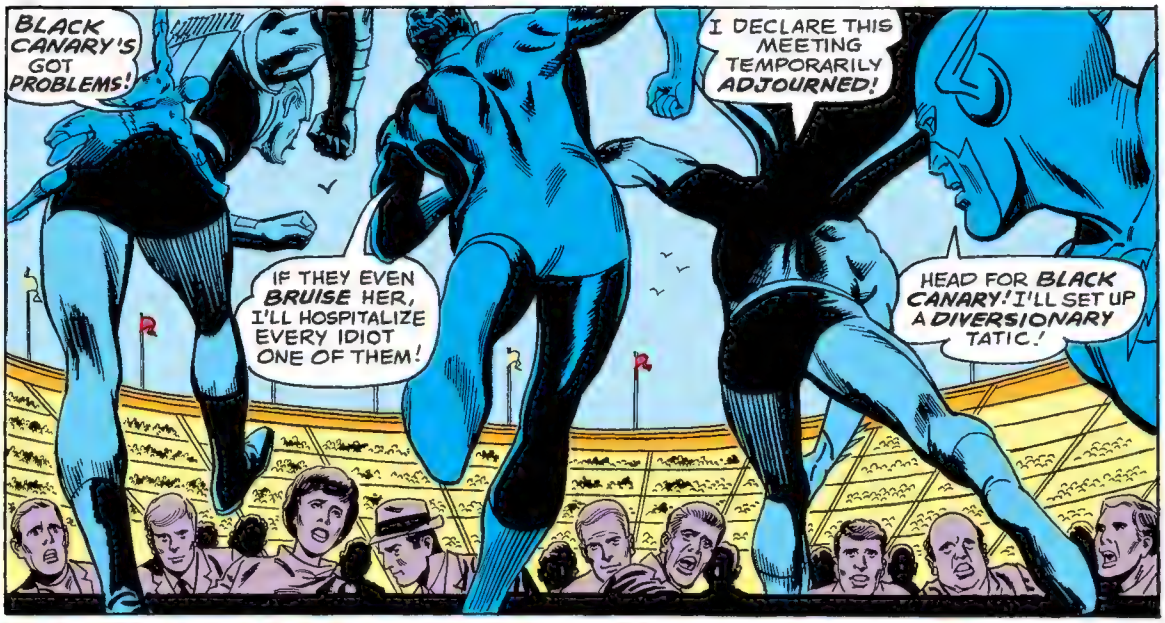


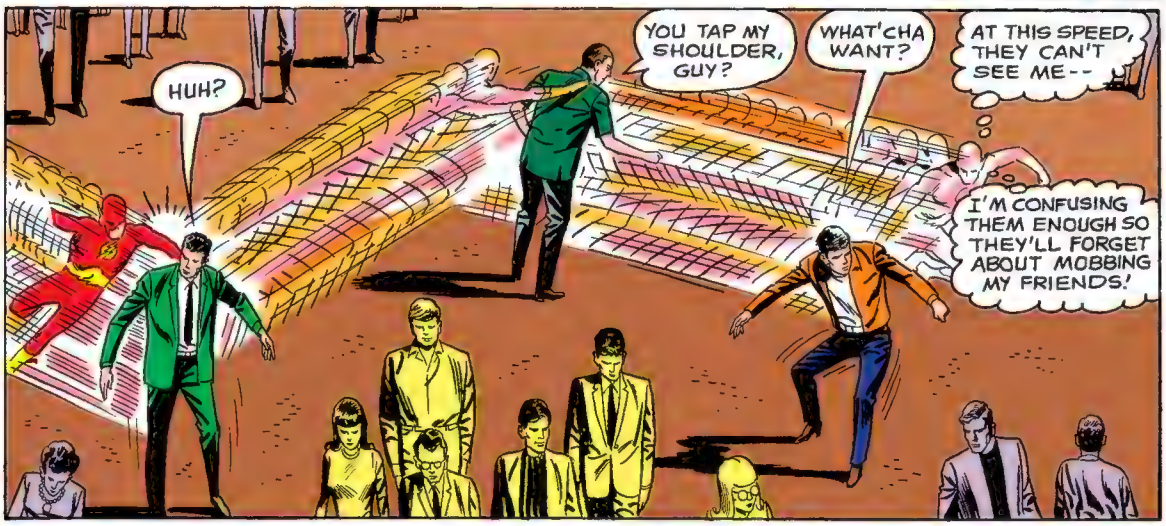
BUT AT THAT MOMENT, IN A SPOTLIGHT-ALCOVE HIGH ABOVE THE STADIUM FLOOR...

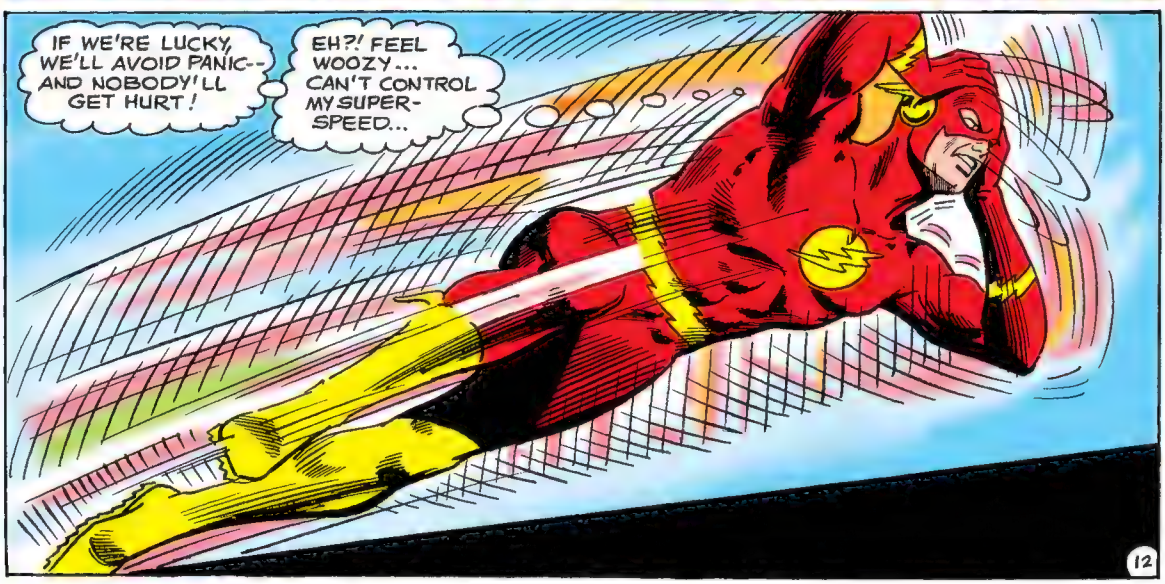
AND, ON THE STAGE BELOW...



SNAPPER!? WHEN THAT KID DECIDES HE DOESN'T LIKE SOMEONE, HE REALLY GOES ALL THE WAY!
I CONTEND THAT SUPER-HEROES ARE HARMFUL! AS MR. DOUGH POINTS OUT, WE'VE BECOME TOO DEPENDENT ON THEM...
...WE'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO FIGHT OUR OWN BATTLES!
...WE'RE CONVINCED THAT ANY TRAIT THAT ISN'T AVERAGE IS ULTIMATELY HARMFUL TO THE HUMAN RACE!
FELLA'S GOT SOME-THIN'!
YEAH! LIKE THAT DAME... SHE SURE AIN'T ORDINARY!
YOU SAID IT, PAL! SHE'S LOTS BETTER-LOOKIN' THAN MOST!
SHE AIN'T GOT ANY RIGHT TO BE SO PRETTY!
THEY HAVE TROUBLE IN THEIR EYES...
ASK ME, SHE MUST BE A COMMIE AGENT OR SOMETHIN'!
GENTLEMEN, I SUGGEST YOU RETREAT BEFORE I'M FORCED TO BEHAVE IN A DISTINCTLY UNLADYLIKE MANNER!
YOU WERE WARNED--!
WHUFF


BLACK CANARY'S GOT PROBLEMS!
IF THEY EVEN BRUISE HER, I'LL HOSPITALIZE EVERY IDIOT ONE OF THEM!
I DECLARE THIS MEETING TEMPORARILY ADJOURNED!
HEAD FOR BLACK CANARY! I'LL SET UP A DIVERSIONARY TATIC.!


HUH?
YOU TAP MY SHOULDER, GUY?
WHAT'CHA WANT?
AT THIS SPEED, THEY CAN'T SEE ME--
I'M CONFUSING THEM ENOUGH SO THEY'LL FORGET ABOUT MOBBING MY FRIENDS!


IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE'LL AVOID PANIC-- AND NOBODY'LL GET HURT!
EH?! FEEL WOOZY... CAN'T CONTROL MY SUPER-SPEED...

UNABLE TO STOP, THE **SCARLET SULTAN OF SPEED** SLAMS INTO HIS FELLOW CRIME-FIGHTERS...

WUMPP

LOOKIT! THEY'RE FIGHTIN' **EACH OTHER!**

DOPES! THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOIN'!

IT'S TURNED INTO A **RIOT!**

CAN'T **CONCENTRATE**... CAN'T FOCUS WILL POWER THROUGH MY RING--

FEELING... SLOW AND STUPID--!

I **MUST** HAVE AN APPROPRIATE ARROW... BUT I'LL BE DARNED IF I CAN REMEMBER WHICH!

HOW **HORRIBLE**... BUT **MR. DOUGH** SAYS ITS **NECESSARY!**

RRRRRRR

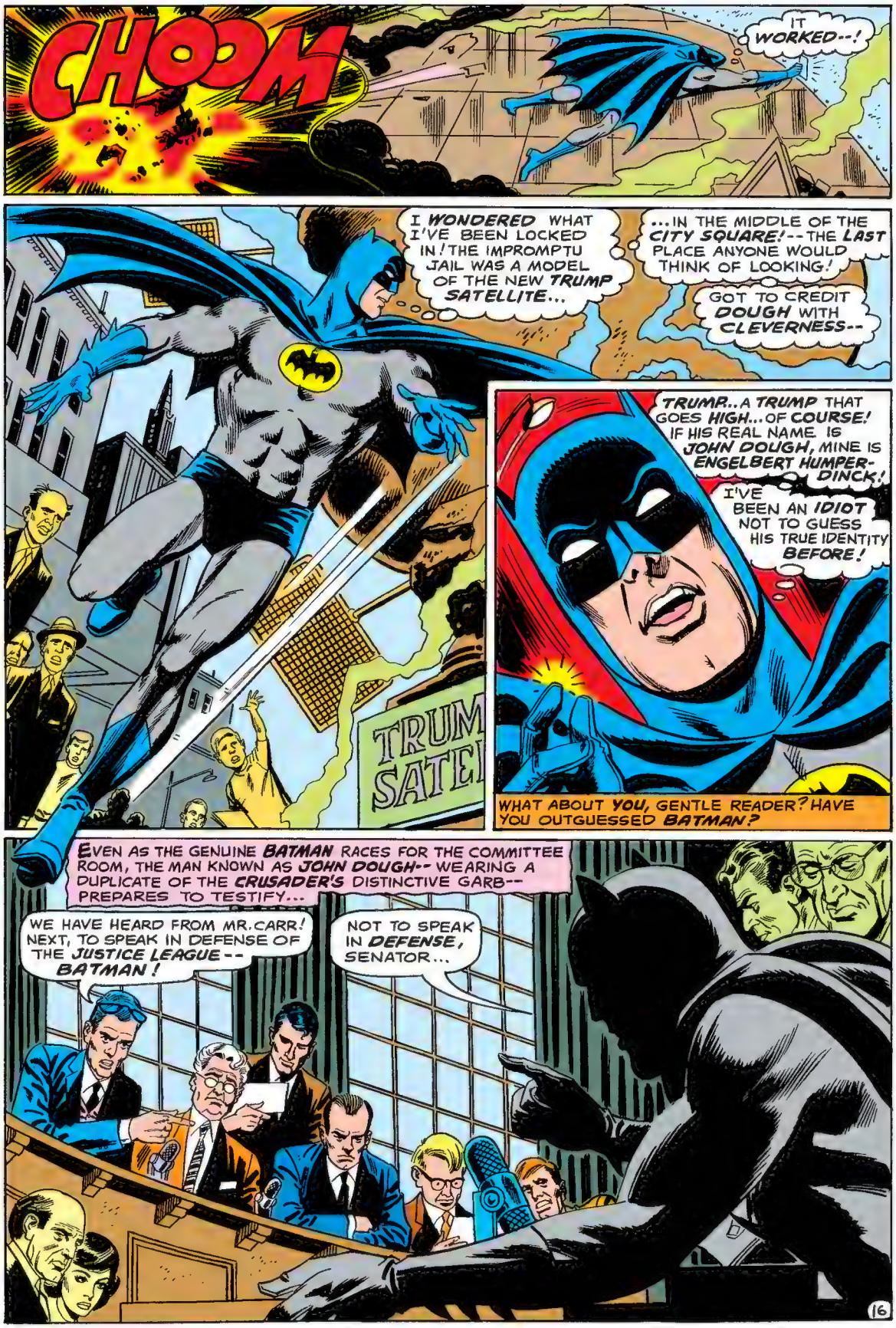
POLICE SIRENS! THIS IS **EMBARRASSING!** ORDINARY POLICEMEN WILL HAVE TO DO WHAT WE **COULDN'T!**

FELLAS... THOSE OFFICERS ARE GONNA ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS WE CAN'T ANSWER!

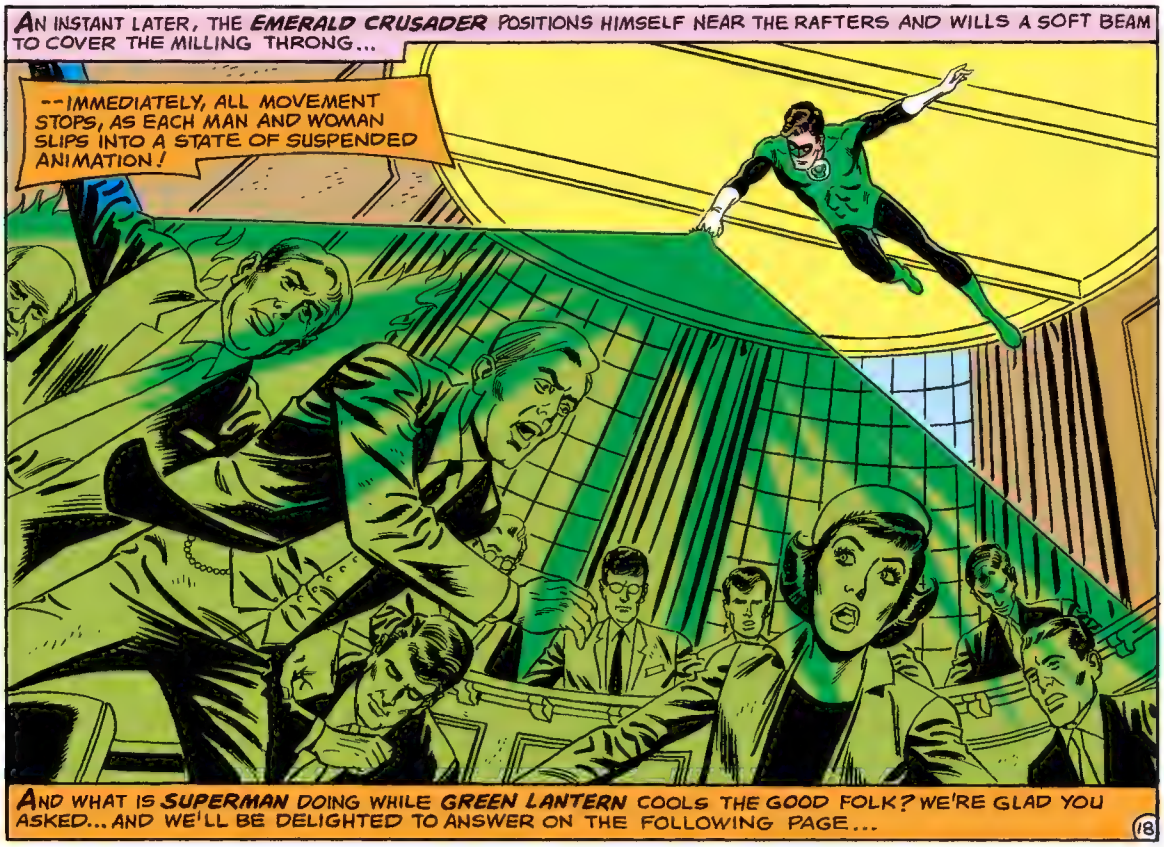
I SUGGEST WE... ER... **LEAVE!**

SO, EACH OF THE **JUSTICE LEAGUERS** IN HIS OWN WAY QUITS THE SCENE...

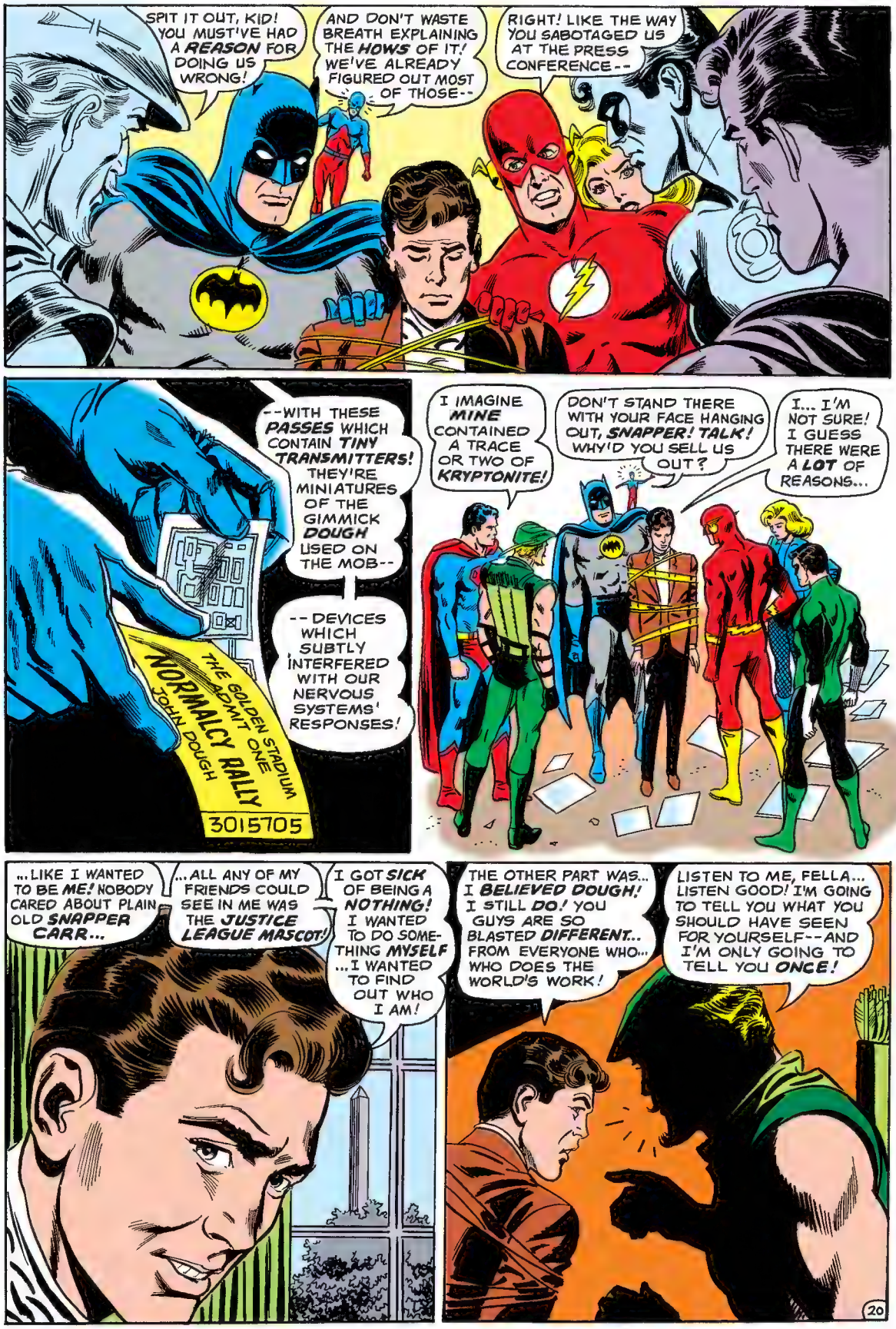
MEANWHILE, BATMAN IS STILL STRUGGLING TO ESCAPE...
AND FROM WASHINGTON... A SPECIAL SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS BEEN CALLED TO INVESTIGATE JOHN DOUGH'S CHARGE THAT THE JUSTICE LEAGUE CAUSED THE RIOT AT GOLDEN STADIUM...
NEWS
AT LAST! I STRETCHED THE ROPE ENOUGH TO FREE MY HANDS...
BUT I'M STILL IMPRISONED BEHIND THREE FEET OF STEEL.. AND I'VE GOT TO FREE MYSELF IN TIME FOR THAT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING!
THE COMBINATION OF THAT TELEVISION SET AND THIS TANK OF OXYGEN MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED--
IT'LL BE THE RISKIEST STUNT I'VE EVER TRIED!
USING THESE COPPER WIRES, I CAN IMPROVISE A DETONATOR--
-- AND THIS TANK OF PURE OXYGEN SHOULD EXPLODE LIKE A BARREL OF BLASTING POWDER!
GOT TO MAKE THIS QUICK! I CAN ONLY HOLD MY BREATH A FEW MINUTES...
...THIS ROOM IS STILL FULL OF POISON GAS!
HERE GOES--
15


CHOOM
IT WORKED--!
I WONDERED WHAT I'VE BEEN LOCKED IN! THE IMPROMPTU JAIL WAS A MODEL OF THE NEW TRUMP SATELLITE...
...IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY SQUARE!--THE LAST PLACE ANYONE WOULD THINK OF LOOKING!
GOT TO CREDIT DOUGH WITH CLEVERNESS--
TRUM
SATE
TRUMP...A TRUMP THAT GOES HIGH...OF COURSE! IF HIS REAL NAME IS JOHN DOUGH, MINE IS ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK!
I'VE BEEN AN IDIOT NOT TO GUESS HIS TRUE IDENTITY BEFORE!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, GENTLE READER? HAVE YOU OUTGUESSED BATMAN?
EVEN AS THE GENUINE BATMAN RACES FOR THE COMMITTEE ROOM, THE MAN KNOWN AS JOHN DOUGH-- WEARING A DUPLICATE OF THE CRUSADER'S DISTINCTIVE GARB-- PREPARES TO TESTIFY...
WE HAVE HEARD FROM MR.CARR! NEXT, TO SPEAK IN DEFENSE OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE-- BATMAN!
NOT TO SPEAK IN DEFENSE, SENATOR...

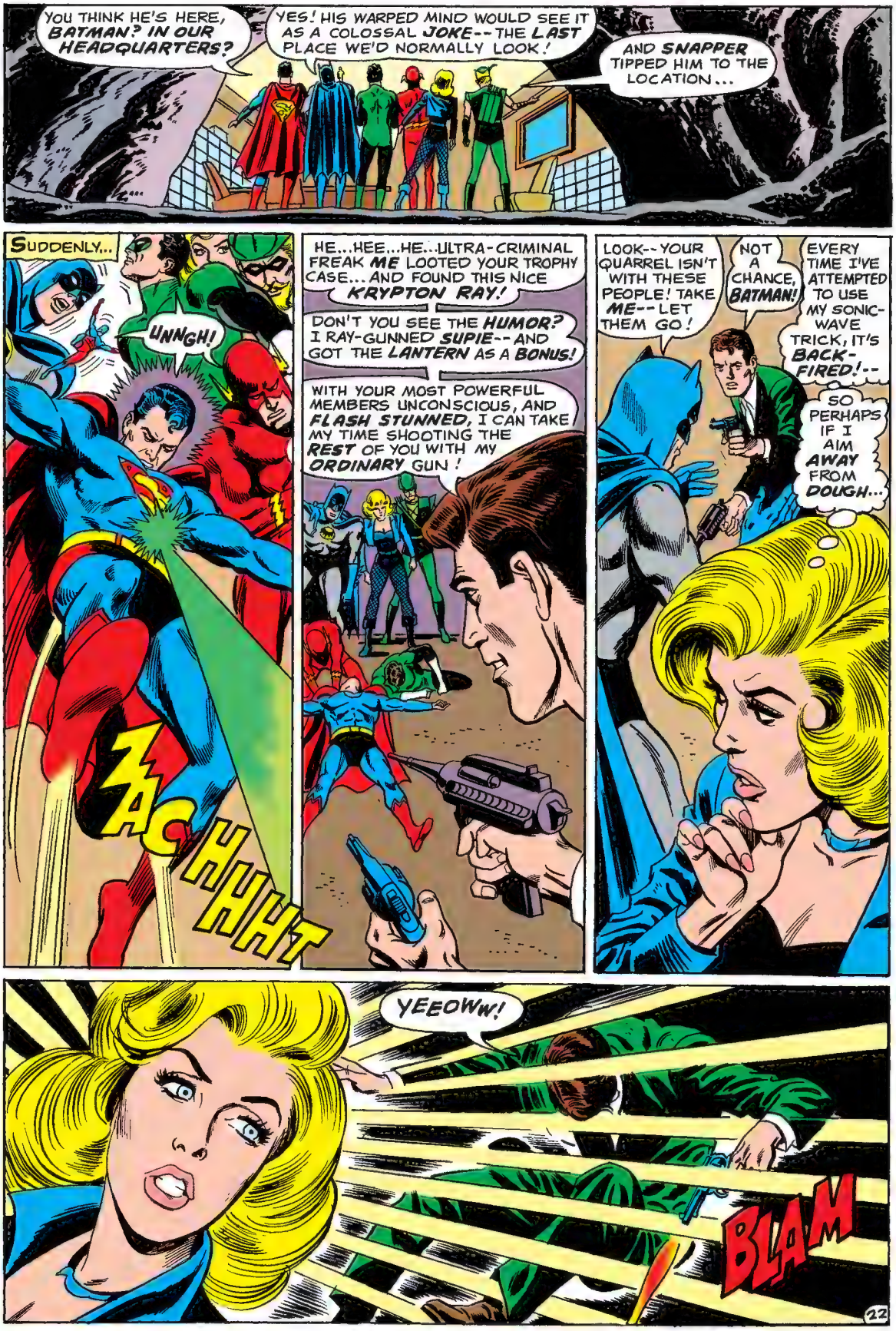
CONSCIENCE COMPELS ME TO STATE THAT MY FELLOW JLA MEMBERS HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT...
THAT'S A LIE--
--THIS MAN IS AN IMPOSTOR! HIS ABSURD CLAIM IS PART OF AN ELABORATE SCHEME TO DISCREDIT OUR GROUP!
SENATORS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF JOHN DOUGH IS REALLY AN ARCH-CRIMINAL--
CORRECT, CAPED CRUD!-- AN ARCH-CRIMINAL SMART ENOUGH TO PLAN AN EXIT!
FIRE-GRENADES!
TIME TO DO OUR THING, SUPERMAN!
RIGHT, GL! YOU TAKE CARE OF THE CROWD-- I'LL HANDLE THE BLAZE!
17

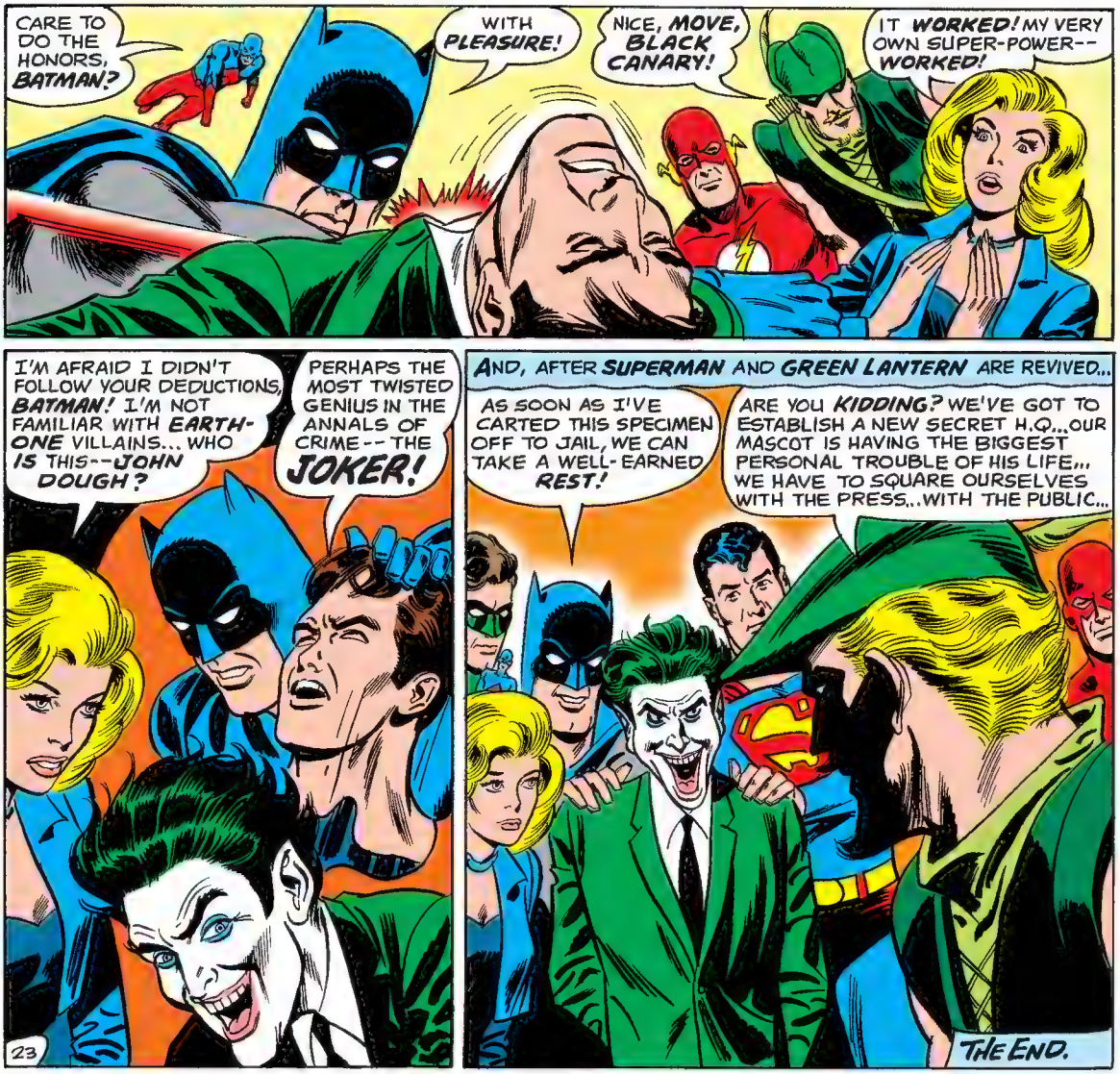

AN INSTANT LATER, THE EMERALD CRUSADER POSITIONS HIMSELF NEAR THE RAFTERS AND WILLS A SOFT BEAM TO COVER THE MILLING THRONG...
--IMMEDIATELY, ALL MOVEMENT STOPS, AS EACH MAN AND WOMAN SLIPS INTO A STATE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION!
AND WHAT IS SUPERMAN DOING WHILE GREEN LANTERN COOLS THE GOOD FOLK? WE'RE GLAD YOU ASKED... AND WE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO ANSWER ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE...
18

SWIFT AS LIGHT, THE MIGHTY MAN OF STEEL CIRCLES THE ROOM, GATHERING THE BLAZING GRENADES IN HIS INVULNERABLE FINGERS...
AND, AS EASILY AS AN ORDINARY HUMAN MIGHT CRUSH A SOAP BUBBLE, EXTINGUISHES THEM...
OKAY, GL--MENACE ENDED! LET THE PEOPLE GO!
--REAL HARSH WORDS! DON'T TRY TO SLINK OFF, SNAPPER--
YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE THE CHIEF ATTRACTION AT A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER PARTY!
HEY, STEVE--YOU GOT ANY IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENED?
NOPE! IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY I ONLY JUST GOT HERE!
WHOEVER THAT DOUGH BUZZARD IS, HE'S SLICK! HE SLIPPED AWAY WITHOUT A TRACE!
BUT HIS BUDDY DIDN'T! AND I WANT WORDS WITH OUR DOUBLE-CROSSING EX-MASCOT--
19


SPIT IT OUT, KID! YOU MUST'VE HAD A REASON FOR DOING US WRONG!
AND DON'T WASTE BREATH EXPLAINING THE HOWS OF IT! WE'VE ALREADY FIGURED OUT MOST OF THOSE--
RIGHT! LIKE THE WAY YOU SABOTAGED US AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE--
--WITH THESE PASSES WHICH CONTAIN TINY TRANSMITTERS! THEY'RE MINIATURES OF THE GIMMICK DOUGH USED ON THE MOB--
--DEVICES WHICH SUBTLY INTERFERED WITH OUR NERVOUS SYSTEMS' RESPONSES!
THE GOLDEN STADIUM
ADMIT ONE
NORMALCY RALLY
JOHN DOUGH
3015705
I IMAGINE MINE CONTAINED A TRACE OR TWO OF KRYPTONITE!
DON'T STAND THERE WITH YOUR FACE HANGING OUT, SNAPPER! TALK! WHY'D YOU SELL US OUT?
I... I'M NOT SURE! I GUESS THERE WERE A LOT OF REASONS...
...LIKE I WANTED TO BE ME! NOBODY CARED ABOUT PLAIN OLD SNAPPER CARR...
...ALL ANY OF MY FRIENDS COULD SEE IN ME WAS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MASCOT!
I GOT SICK OF BEING A NOTHING! I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING MYSELF ...I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHO I AM!
THE OTHER PART WAS... I BELIEVED DOUGH! I STILL DO! YOU GUYS ARE SO BLASTED DIFFERENT... FROM EVERYONE WHO... WHO DOES THE WORLD'S WORK!
LISTEN TO ME, FELLA... LISTEN GOOD! I'M GOING TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN FOR YOURSELF--AND I'M ONLY GOING TO TELL YOU ONCE!

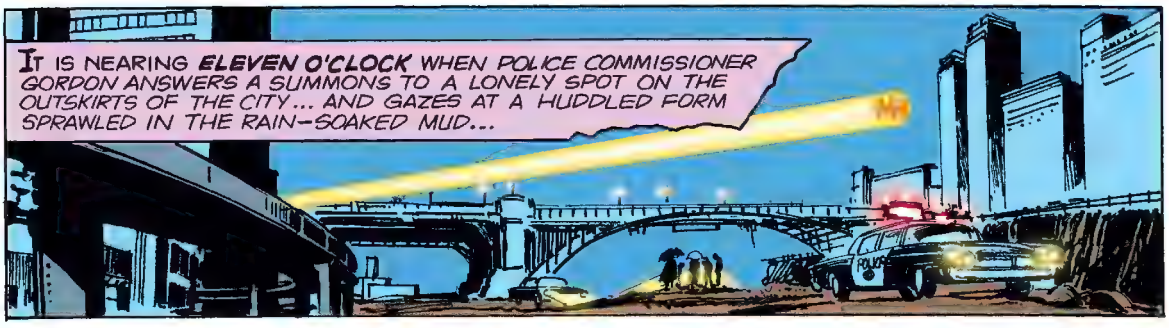
DOUGH'S GLORIFICATION OF THE AVERAGE IS SHEER NONSENSE! THE "WORLD'S WORK" GETS DONE BECAUSE OF WHAT'S DIFFERENT IN INDIVIDUALS ...
... EACH PERSON HAS A TALENT, A SKILL, A THING HE DOES BETTER THAN HIS FELLOWS!
TAKE ENOUGH OF THOSE TALENTS, PUT THEM TOGETHER, AND YOU BUILD A CIVILIZATION! DENY THEM AND YOU CANCEL EVERYTHING THAT MAKES US HUMAN!
WELL SAID, GA! MAYBE YOU SHOULD RUN FOR OFFICE!
YEAH... NOW I WISH YOU'D MAKE ANOTHER SPEECH-- ONE THAT SAYS WHERE THAT DOUGH CRUMB IS HIDING!
I CAN MAKE THAT SPEECH, ATOM! I'M PRETTY CERTAIN I KNOW WHERE HE IS-- AND WHO HE IS!
I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY!
THE FIRST CLUE WAS THE WEAPON HE USED AGAINST ATOM AND MYSELF-- LAUGHING GAS!
NEXT, HE SCHEMED TO KILL ME LAST-- AFTER I'D WITNESSED THE DOWNFALL OF MY FELLOW JUSTICE LEAGUERS!
THAT SUGGESTED REVENGE... ONE OF MY PARTICULAR ENEMIES!
THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE FELL INTO PLACE WHEN I SAW HE'D IMPRISONED ME IN A TRUMP SATELLITE ...
... A TRUMP-- THE HIGHEST CARD IN SOME GAMES-- ALSO KNOWN AS--
--DON'T SAY IT, BATMAN-- AND MAKE THE REST OF US SO-CALLED SUPER-HEROES FEEL LIKE DOPES!
21

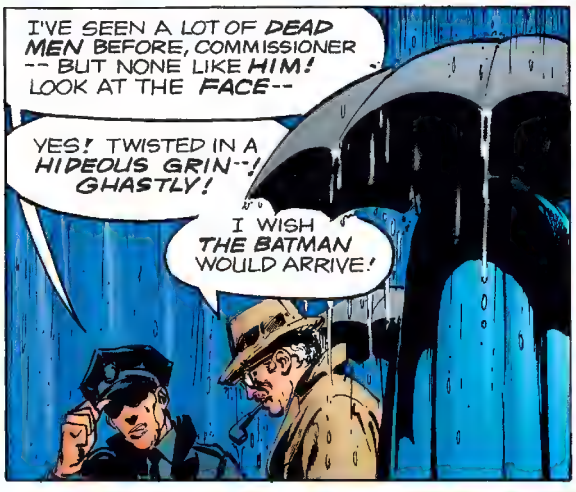

YOU THINK HE'S HERE, BATMAN? IN OUR HEADQUARTERS?
YES! HIS WARPED MIND WOULD SEE IT AS A COLOSSAL JOKE--THE LAST PLACE WE'D NORMALLY LOOK!
AND SNAPPER TIPPED HIM TO THE LOCATION...
SUDDENLY...
UNNGH!
ZACHHHT
HE...HEE...HE...ULTRA-CRIMINAL FREAK ME LOOTED YOUR TROPHY CASE...AND FOUND THIS NICE KRYPTON RAY!
DON'T YOU SEE THE HUMOR? I RAY-GUNNED SUPIE--AND GOT THE LANTERN AS A BONUS!
WITH YOUR MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS UNCONSCIOUS, AND FLASH STUNNED, I CAN TAKE MY TIME SHOOTING THE REST OF YOU WITH MY ORDINARY GUN!
LOOK--YOUR QUARREL ISN'T WITH THESE PEOPLE! TAKE ME--LET THEM GO!
NOT A CHANCE, BATMAN!
EVERY TIME I'VE ATTEMPTED TO USE MY SONIC-WAVE TRICK, IT'S BACK-FIRED!--
SO PERHAPS IF I AIM AWAY FROM DOUGH...
YEEOWW!
BLAM
22

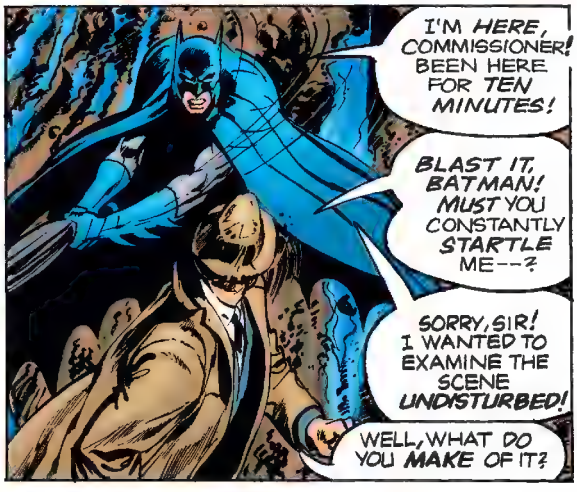

CARE TO DO THE HONORS, BATMAN?
WITH PLEASURE!
NICE, MOVE, BLACK CANARY!
IT WORKED! MY VERY OWN SUPER-POWER-- WORKED!
I'M AFRAID I DIDN'T FOLLOW YOUR DEDUCTIONS, BATMAN! I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH EARTH-ONE VILLAINS... WHO IS THIS--JOHN DOUGH?
PERHAPS THE MOST TWISTED GENIUS IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME -- THE JOKER!
AND, AFTER SUPERMAN AND GREEN LANTERN ARE REVIVED...
AS SOON AS I'VE CARTED THIS SPECIMEN OFF TO JAIL, WE CAN TAKE A WELL-EARNED REST!
ARE YOU KIDDING? WE'VE GOT TO ESTABLISH A NEW SECRET H.Q...OUR MASCOT IS HAVING THE BIGGEST PERSONAL TROUBLE OF HIS LIFE... WE HAVE TO SQUARE OURSELVES WITH THE PRESS...WITH THE PUBLIC...
THE END.

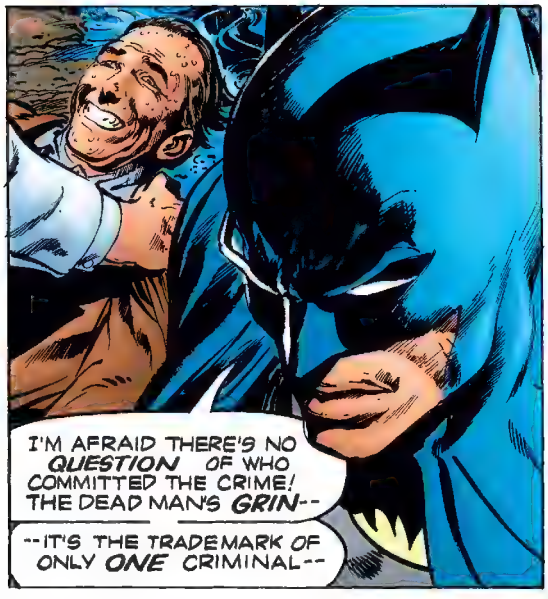
DC
BATMAN
20c
NO. 251
SEPT.
30430
BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
A
LOOK OUT, GOTHAM!
THE JOKER'S BACK IN TOWN!

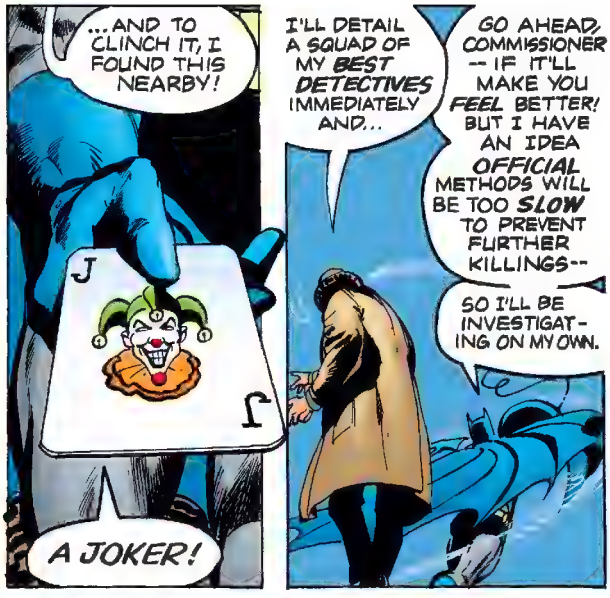
HAHA HAHAHAHA HAHAHA HAHA HA HA
HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHAHAHA HA HAHAHA
HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHAHAHAHAHA
BATMAN
FROM THE DARKNESS OF A COUNTRY ROAD SOMEWHERE NORTH OF GOTHAM CITY... AND FROM THE GREATER DARK OF A PAST FILLED WITH EVIL ... COMES A TERRIFYINGLY FAMILIAR FACE!
THUNDER RACKS THE EARTH AND LIGHTNING SCARS THE SKY AND WETNESS STREAMS FROM THE CLOUDS LIKE TEARS OF MOURNING! IT IS AS THOUGH NATURE IT-SELF WERE WEEPING!
AND WELL IT MIGHT, FOR THERE IS DEATH ABROAD THIS NIGHT!
THE JOKER'S FIVE-WAY REVENGE!
STORY: DENNY O'NEIL
ART: NEAL ADAMS
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

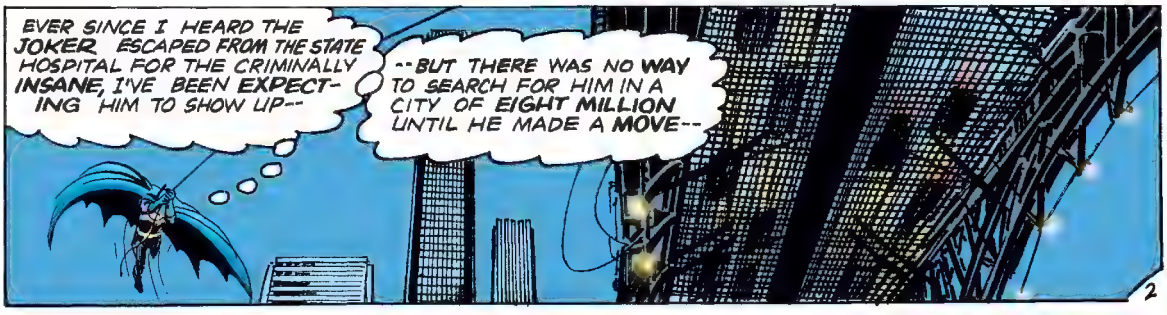

IT IS NEARING ELEVEN O'CLOCK WHEN POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ANSWERS A SUMMONS TO A LONELY SPOT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY... AND GAZES AT A HUDDLED FORM SPRAWLED IN THE RAIN-SOAKED MUD...

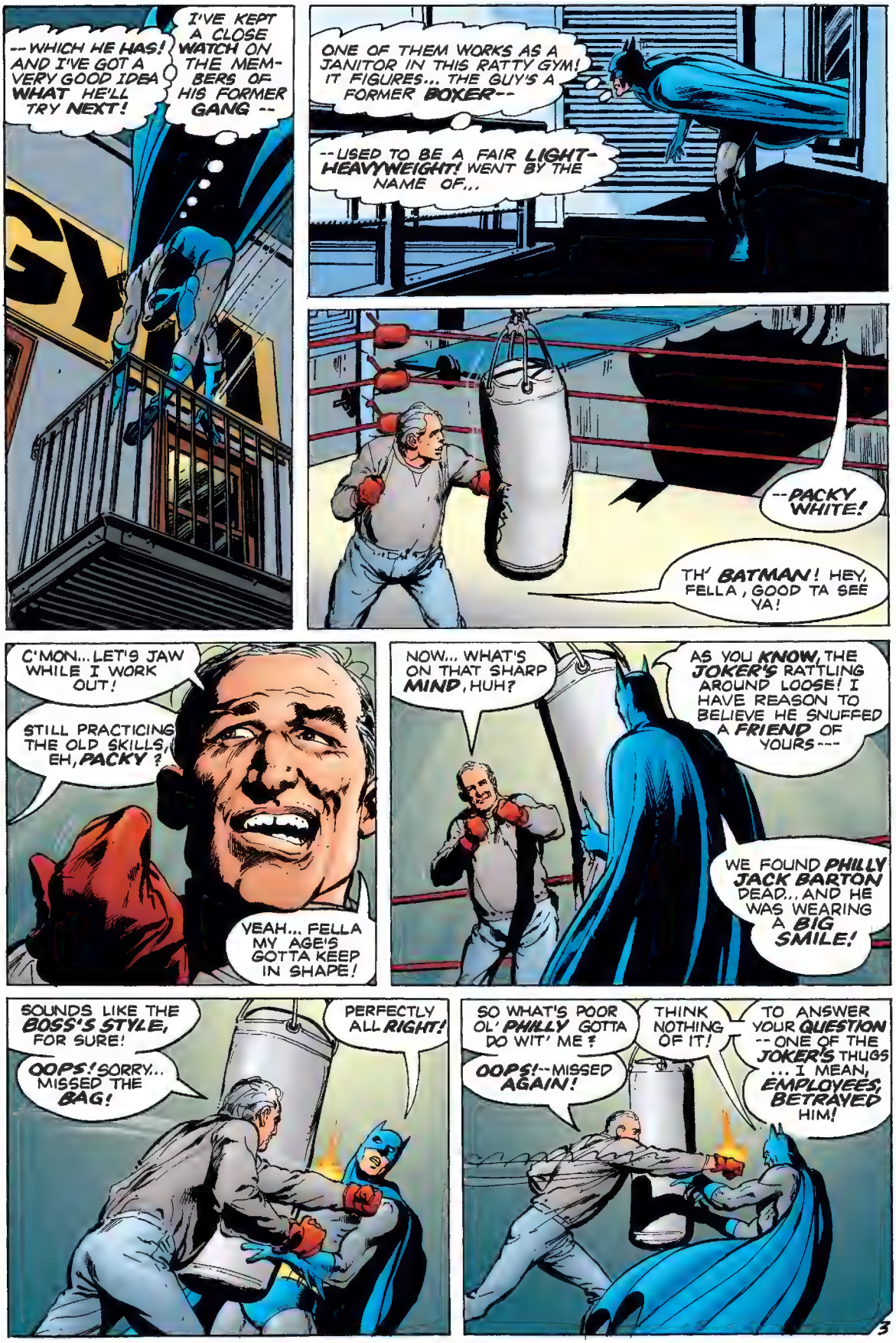

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF DEAD MEN BEFORE, COMMISSIONER -- BUT NONE LIKE HIM! LOOK AT THE FACE--
YES! TWISTED IN A HIDEOUS GRIN--! GHASTLY!
I WISH THE BATMAN WOULD ARRIVE!


I'M HERE, COMMISSIONER! BEEN HERE FOR TEN MINUTES!
BLAST IT, BATMAN! MUST YOU CONSTANTLY STARTLE ME--?
SORRY, SIR! I WANTED TO EXAMINE THE SCENE UNDISTURBED!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?

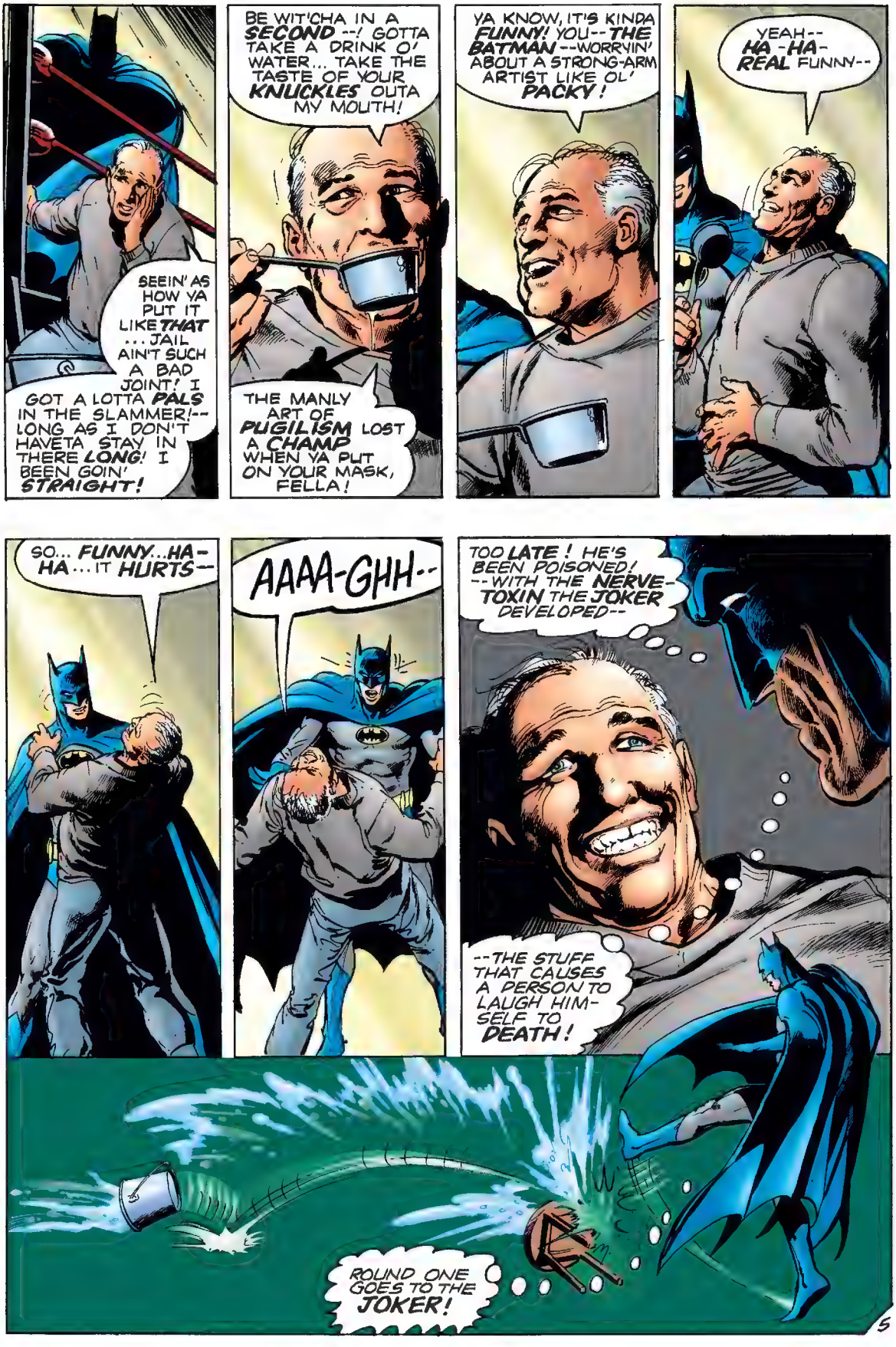

I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO QUESTION OF WHO COMMITTED THE CRIME! THE DEAD MAN'S GRIN--
--IT'S THE TRADEMARK OF ONLY ONE CRIMINAL--

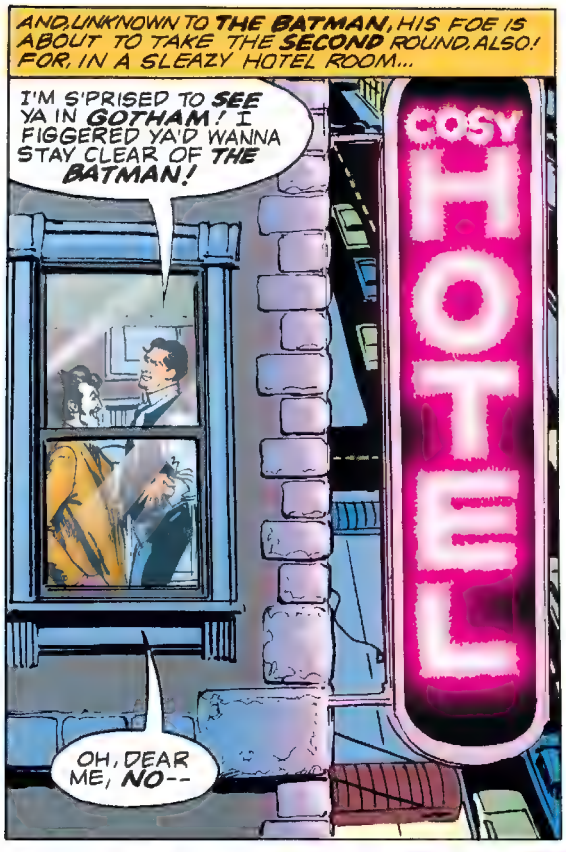

...AND TO CLINCH IT, I FOUND THIS NEARBY!
J
J
A JOKER!
I'LL DETAIL A SQUAD OF MY BEST DETECTIVES IMMEDIATELY AND...
GO AHEAD, COMMISSIONER -- IF IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA OFFICIAL METHODS WILL BE TOO SLOW TO PREVENT FURTHER KILLINGS--
SO I'LL BE INVESTIGATING ON MY OWN.


EVER SINCE I HEARD THE JOKER ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING HIM TO SHOW UP--
--BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO SEARCH FOR HIM IN A CITY OF EIGHT MILLION UNTIL HE MADE A MOVE--

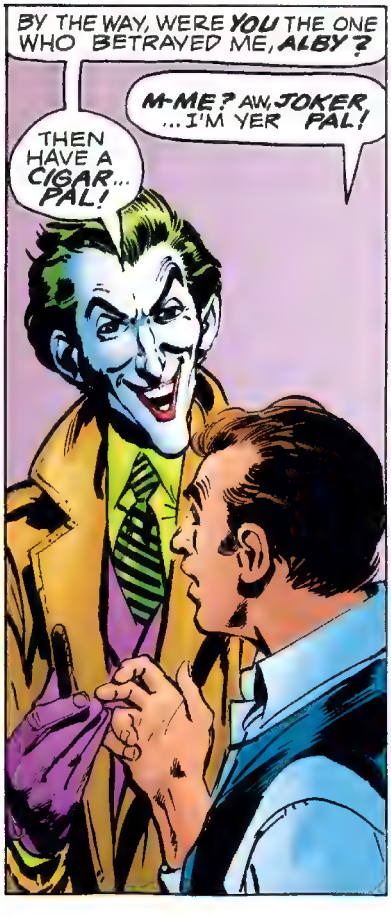

I'VE KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON THE MEMBERS OF HIS FORMER GANG --
--WHICH HE HAS! AND I'VE GOT A VERY GOOD IDEA WHAT HE'LL TRY NEXT!
ONE OF THEM WORKS AS A JANITOR IN THIS RATTY GYM! IT FIGURES... THE GUY'S A FORMER BOXER--
--USED TO BE A FAIR LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT! WENT BY THE NAME OF...
--PACKY WHITE!
TH' BATMAN! HEY, FELLA, GOOD TA SEE YA!
C'MON... LET'S JAW WHILE I WORK OUT!
STILL PRACTICING THE OLD SKILLS, EH, PACKY?
YEAH... FELLA MY AGE'S GOTTA KEEP IN SHAPE!
NOW... WHAT'S ON THAT SHARP MIND, HUH?
AS YOU KNOW, THE JOKER'S RATTLING AROUND LOOSE! I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HE SNUFFED A FRIEND OF YOURS---
WE FOUND PHILLY JACK BARTON DEAD.., AND HE WAS WEARING A BIG SMILE!
SOUNDS LIKE THE BOSS'S STYLE, FOR SURE!
OOPS! SORRY... MISSED THE BAG!
PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT!
SO WHAT'S POOR OL' PHILLY GOTTA DO WIT' ME?
OOPS!--MISSED AGAIN!
THINK NOTHING OF IT!
TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION --ONE OF THE JOKER'S THUGS ... I MEAN, EMPLOYEES, BETRAYED HIM!

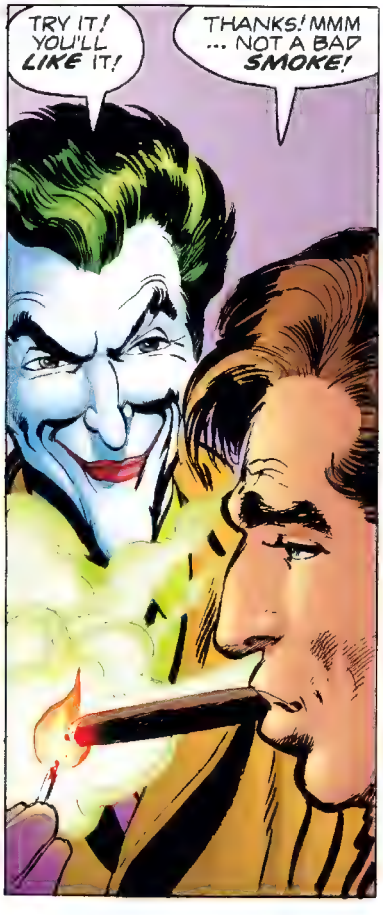
WHEN WE FINALLY NAILED HIM, HE SWORE HE'D KILL YOU ALL -- REMEMBER?
CHECK! YA FIGURE HE'LL COME AFTER OL' PACKY?
CORRECT! I'M GUESSING HE'LL SYSTEMATICALLY MURDER EVERY ONE OF YOU! -- UNLESS YOU PLACE YOURSELF UNDER POLICE PROTECTION!
GO TO JAIL WITHOUT BEIN' DRAGGED? NOT THIS PUG--!
I CAN'T FORCE YOU TO COOPERATE, PACKY--
--HOWEVER, YOU JUST MIGHT HAVE A SLIGHT ACCIDENT -- A FIST-TYPE ACCIDENT--
--AND IT JUST MIGHT PUT YOU IN THE HOSPITAL--
--WHERE OFFICERS COULD GUARD YOU UNTIL THE JOKER IS CAUGHT!
YOU CAN SURRENDER YOURSELF -- OR WE CAN CONTINUE PLAYING!
YOUR CHOICE, PACKY-- MAKE IT!


SEEIN' AS HOW YA PUT IT LIKE THAT ... JAIL AIN'T SUCH A BAD JOINT! I GOT A LOTTA PALS IN THE SLAMMER!-- LONG AS I DON'T HAVETA STAY IN THERE LONG! I BEEN GOIN' STRAIGHT!
BE WIT'CHA IN A SECOND --! GOTTA TAKE A DRINK O' WATER... TAKE THE TASTE OF YOUR KNUCKLES OUTA MY MOUTH!
THE MANLY ART OF PUGILISM LOST A CHAMP WHEN YA PUT ON YOUR MASK, FELLA!
YA KNOW, IT'S KINDA FUNNY! YOU--THE BATMAN --WORRYIN' ABOUT A STRONG-ARM ARTIST LIKE OL' PACKY!
YEAH-- HA-HA- REAL FUNNY--
SO... FUNNY...HA-HA... IT HURTS--
AAAA-GHH--
TOO LATE! HE'S BEEN POISONED! --WITH THE NERVE-TOXIN THE JOKER DEVELOPED--
--THE STUFF THAT CAUSES A PERSON TO LAUGH HIM-SELF TO DEATH!
ROUND ONE GOES TO THE JOKER!
5


AND, UNKNOWN TO THE BATMAN, HIS FOE IS ABOUT TO TAKE THE SECOND ROUND, ALSO! FOR, IN A SLEAZY HOTEL ROOM...
I'M S'PRISED TO SEE YA IN GOTHAM! I FIGGERED YA'D WANNA STAY CLEAR OF THE BATMAN!
COSY
HOTEL
OH, DEAR ME, NO--

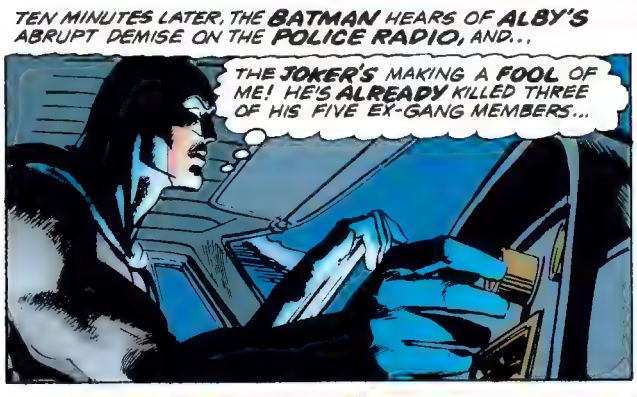
--I FULLY EXPECT HIM TO FIND ME, REGARDLESS OF WHERE I HIDE! I DON'T KNOW HOW... OR WHEN...
...BUT THE CAPED CRUSADER WILL LOCATE ME! HE ALWAYS DOES! HOWEVER, I INTEND TO BE READY FOR HIM!

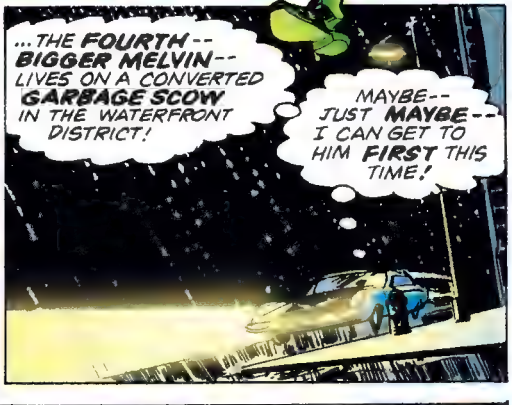

BY THE WAY, WERE YOU THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME, ALBY?
M-ME? AW, JOKER, ...I'M YER PAL!
THEN HAVE A CIGAR... PAL!

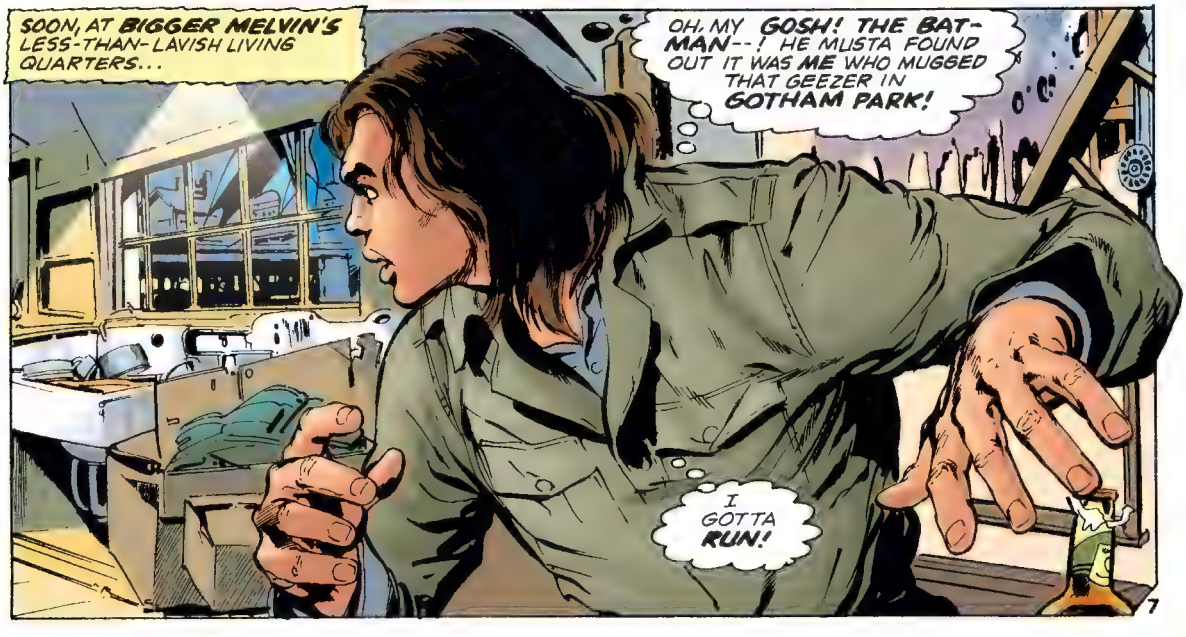

TRY IT! YOU'LL LIKE IT!
THANKS! MMM ... NOT A BAD SMOKE!

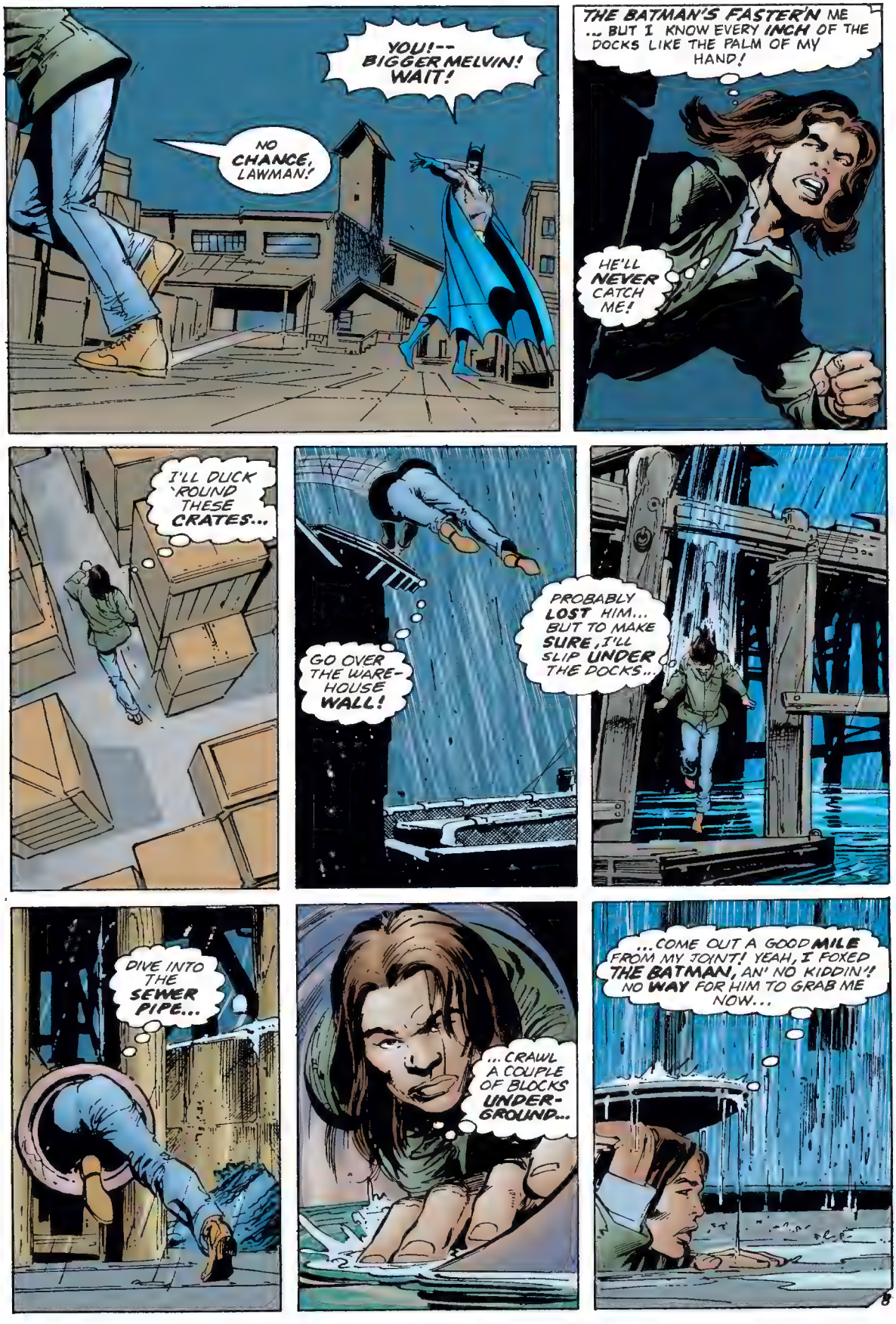
HEY... I BET YOU'RE PULLIN' A GAG ON ME, RIGHT? I BET THIS'S AN EXPLODING CIGAR, RIGHT?
SAME OLD JOKER... ALWAYS WITH THE GAGS! WELL... I CAN GO ALONG WITH A LAUGH! I MEAN, WHAT HARM CAN A LITTLE EXPLODING CIGAR DO, RIGHT?

VOOM
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
POOR FELLOW! HE GUESSED PART OF MY JOKE! A PITY HE DIDN'T GUESS THAT THE EXPLOSIVE IN THE CIGAR WAS NITROGLYCERIN!
REST IN PIECES, ALBY!

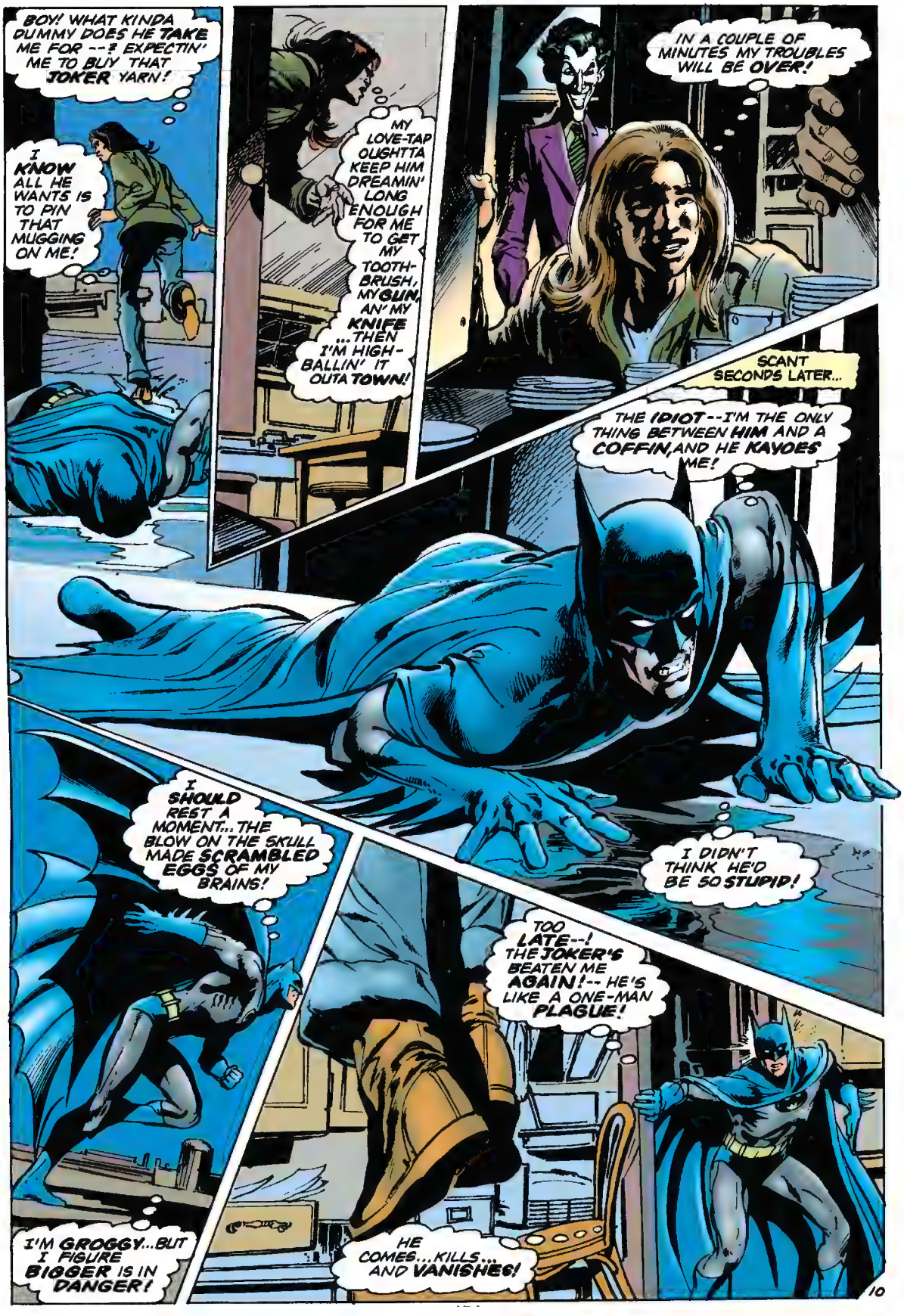

TEN MINUTES LATER, THE BATMAN HEARS OF ALBY'S ABRUPT DEMISE ON THE POLICE RADIO, AND...
THE JOKER'S MAKING A FOOL OF ME! HE'S ALREADY KILLED THREE OF HIS FIVE EX-GANG MEMBERS...

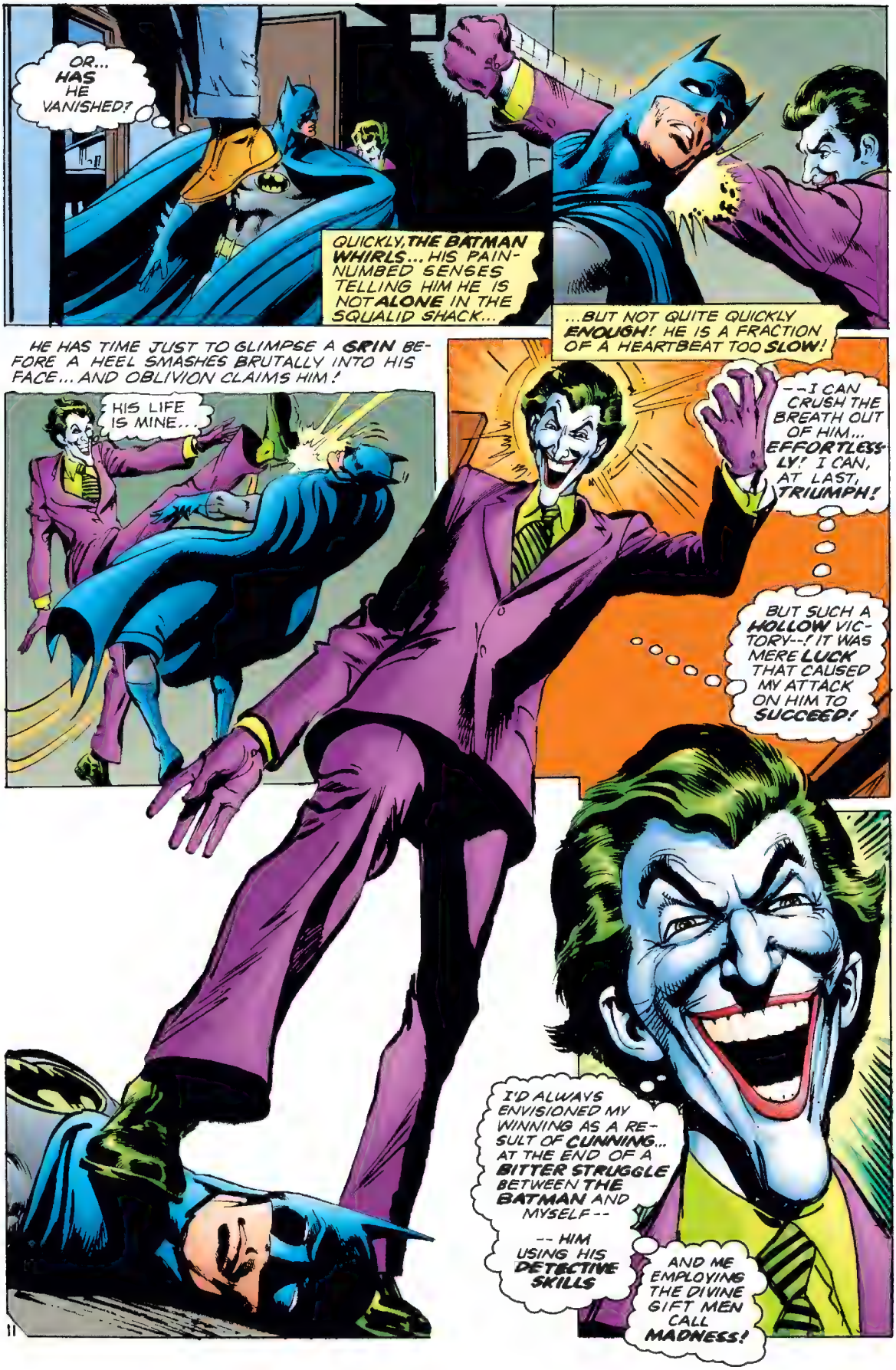

...THE FOURTH -- BIGGER MELVIN -- LIVES ON A CONVERTED GARBAGE SCOW IN THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT!
MAYBE -- JUST MAYBE -- I CAN GET TO HIM FIRST THIS TIME!

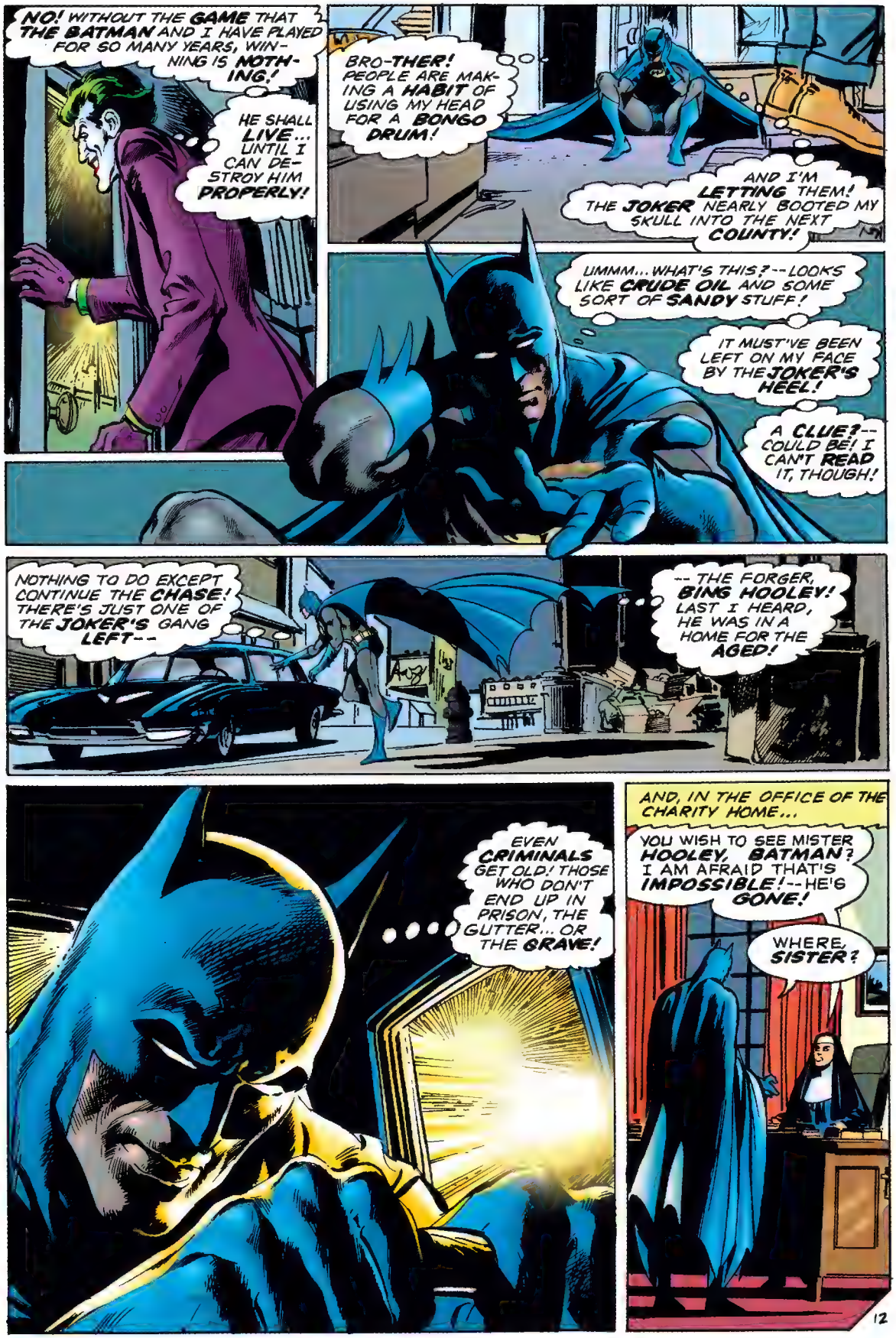

SOON, AT BIGGER MELVIN'S LESS-THAN-LAVISH LIVING QUARTERS...
OH, MY GOSH! THE BATMAN--! HE MUSTA FOUND OUT IT WAS ME WHO MUGGED THAT GEEZER IN GOTHAM PARK!
I GOTTA RUN!

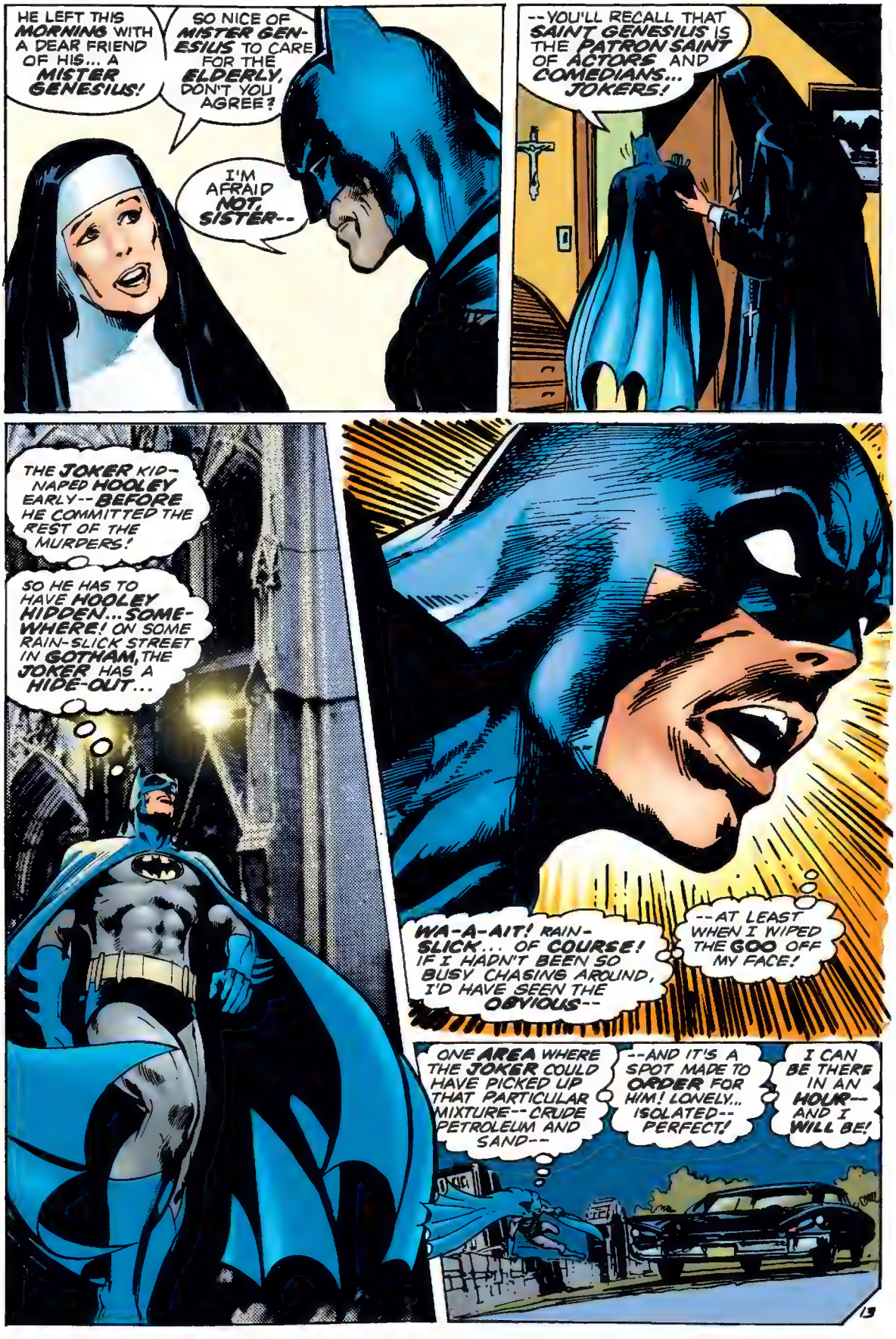

YOU!-- BIGGER MELVIN! WAIT!
NO CHANCE, LAWMAN!
THE BATMAN'S FASTER'N ME ... BUT I KNOW EVERY INCH OF THE DOCKS LIKE THE PALM OF MY HAND!
HE'LL NEVER CATCH ME!
I'LL DUCK 'ROUND THESE CRATES...
GO OVER THE WARE-HOUSE WALL!
PROBABLY LOST HIM... BUT TO MAKE SURE, I'LL SLIP UNDER THE DOCKS..
DIVE INTO THE SEWER PIPE...
... CRAWL A COUPLE OF BLOCKS UNDER-GROUND...
... COME OUT A GOOD MILE FROM MY JOINT! YEAH, I FOXED THE BATMAN, AN' NO KIDDIN'! NO WAY FOR HIM TO GRAB ME NOW...

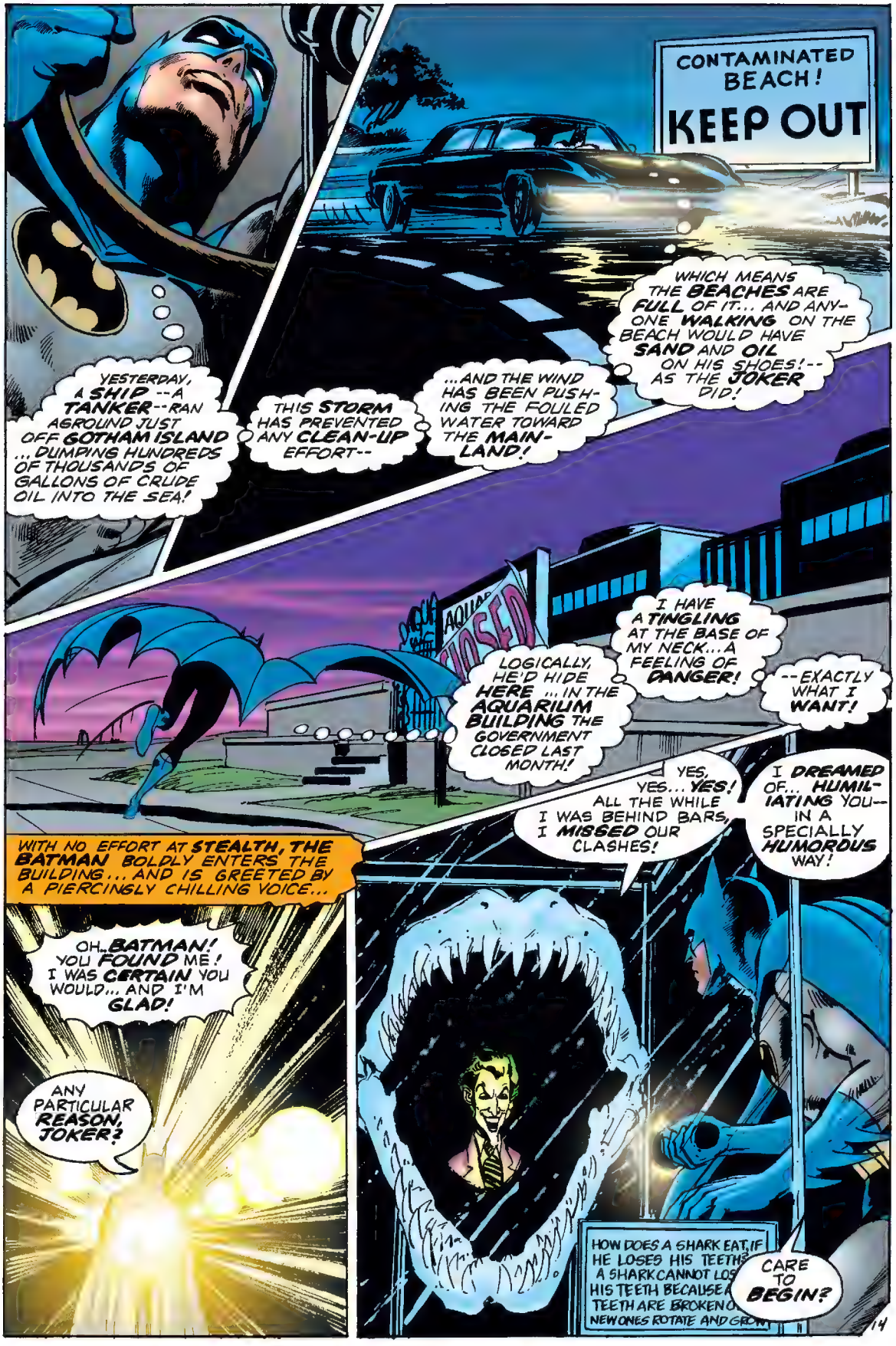
AS I WAS SAYING, BIGGER...
GAKK!
...YOUR FORMER LEADER HAS DONE IN THREE OF YOUR ASSOCIATES, AND I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU'RE NEXT ON HIS LIST OF VICTIMS!
I'M ASKING YOU TO PUT YOURSELF IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!
S-SURE...
...ANYTHING YOU SAY! ONLY HOW'S ABOUT WE STOP BY MY SCOW SO'S I CAN GET MY TOOTHBRUSH?
A REASONABLE REQUEST! LEAD ON!
HEY...WELL, I DON'T WANNA SEEM CHICKEN OR NOTHIN'... BUT YOU MIND GOIN' IN AHEAD OF ME?
ANOTHER REASONABLE REQUEST! OKAY... FOLLOW ME!
OKAY, BIGGER! COAST IS CLEAR!
UNNGH!
BONK


BOY! WHAT KINDA DUMMY DOES HE TAKE ME FOR --? EXPECTIN' ME TO BUY THAT JOKER YARN!
I KNOW ALL HE WANTS IS TO PIN THAT MUGGING ON ME!
MY LOVE-TAP OUGHTTA KEEP HIM DREAMIN' LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET MY TOOTH-BRUSH, MY GUN, AN' MY KNIFE ...THEN I'M HIGH-BALLIN' IT OUTA TOWN!
IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES MY TROUBLES WILL BE OVER!
SCANT SECONDS LATER...
THE IDIOT--I'M THE ONLY THING BETWEEN HIM AND A COFFIN, AND HE KAYOES ME!
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE SO STUPID!
I SHOULD REST A MOMENT... THE BLOW ON THE SKULL MADE SCRAMBLED EGGS OF MY BRAINS!
TOO LATE--! THE JOKER'S BEATEN ME AGAIN!-- HE'S LIKE A ONE-MAN PLAGUE!
I'M GROGGY...BUT I FIGURE BIGGER IS IN DANGER!
HE COMES...KILLS... AND VANISHES!

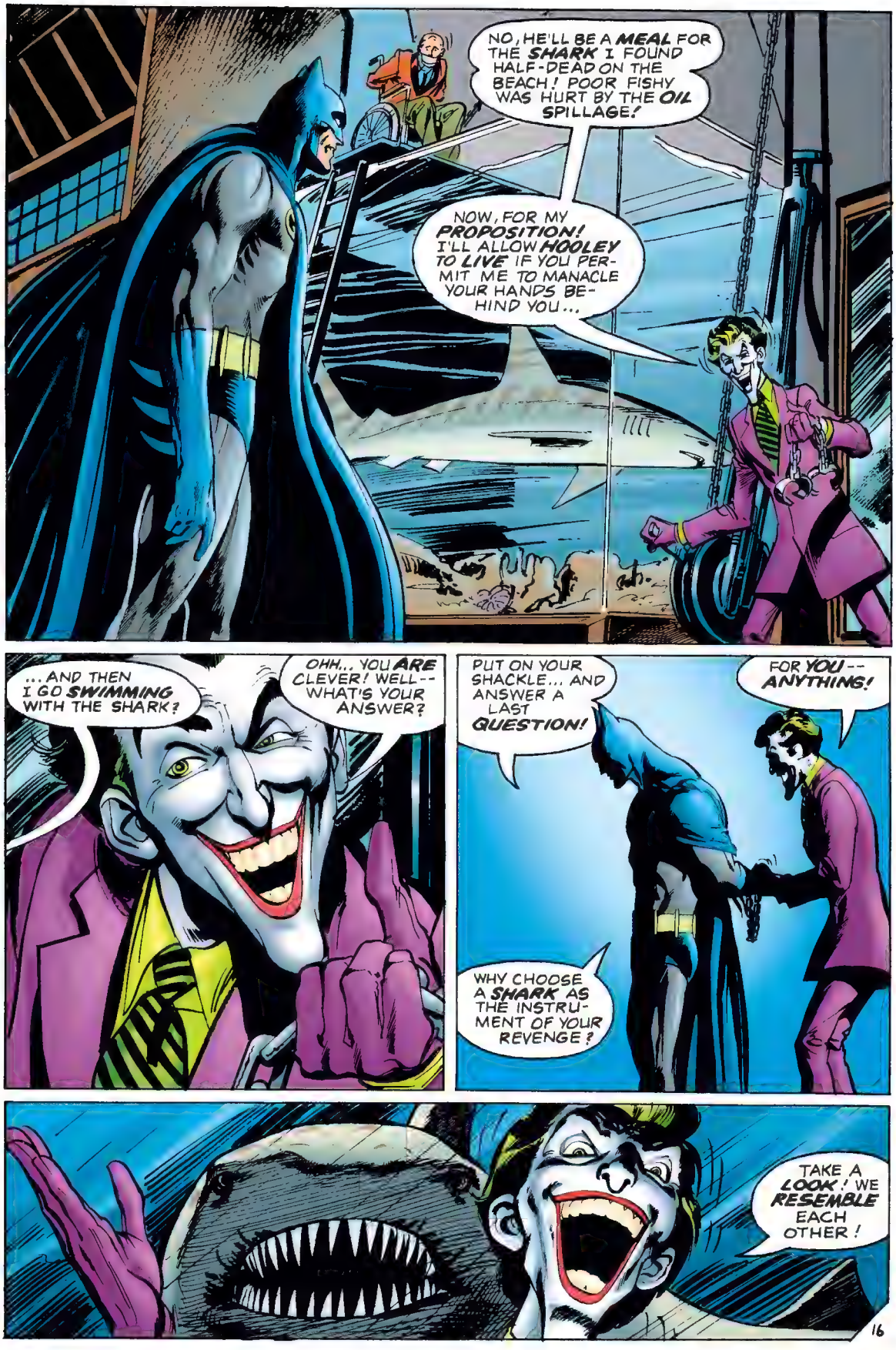

OR... HAS HE VANISHED?
QUICKLY, THE BATMAN WHIRLS... HIS PAIN-NUMBED SENSES TELLING HIM HE IS NOT ALONE IN THE SQUALID SHACK...
...BUT NOT QUITE QUICKLY ENOUGH! HE IS A FRACTION OF A HEARTBEAT TOO SLOW!
HE HAS TIME JUST TO GLIMPSE A GRIN BEFORE A HEEL SMASHES BRUTALLY INTO HIS FACE... AND OBLIVION CLAIMS HIM!
HIS LIFE IS MINE...
--I CAN CRUSH THE BREATH OUT OF HIM... EFFORTLESSLY! I CAN, AT LAST, TRIUMPH!
BUT SUCH A HOLLOW VICTORY--! IT WAS MERE LUCK THAT CAUSED MY ATTACK ON HIM TO SUCCEED!
I'D ALWAYS ENVISIONED MY WINNING AS A RESULT OF CUNNING... AT THE END OF A BITTER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE BATMAN AND MYSELF--
--HIM USING HIS DETECTIVE SKILLS
AND ME EMPLOYING THE DIVINE GIFT MEN CALL MADNESS!


NO! WITHOUT THE GAME THAT THE BATMAN AND I HAVE PLAYED FOR SO MANY YEARS, WINNING IS NOTHING!
HE SHALL LIVE... UNTIL I CAN DESTROY HIM PROPERLY!
BRO-THER! PEOPLE ARE MAKING A HABIT OF USING MY HEAD FOR A BONGO DRUM!
AND I'M LETTING THEM! THE JOKER NEARLY BOOTED MY SKULL INTO THE NEXT COUNTY!
UMMM... WHAT'S THIS?--LOOKS LIKE CRUDE OIL AND SOME SORT OF SANDY STUFF!
IT MUST'VE BEEN LEFT ON MY FACE BY THE JOKER'S HEEL!
A CLUE?--COULD BE! I CAN'T READ IT, THOUGH!
NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT CONTINUE THE CHASE! THERE'S JUST ONE OF THE JOKER'S GANG LEFT--
-- THE FORGER, BING HOOLEY! LAST I HEARD, HE WAS IN A HOME FOR THE AGED!
EVEN CRIMINALS GET OLD! THOSE WHO DON'T END UP IN PRISON, THE GUTTER... OR THE GRAVE!
AND, IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHARITY HOME...
YOU WISH TO SEE MISTER HOOLEY, BATMAN? I AM AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!--HE'S GONE!
WHERE, SISTER?


HE LEFT THIS MORNING WITH A DEAR FRIEND OF HIS... A MISTER GENESIUS!
SO NICE OF MISTER GENESIUS TO CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, DON'T YOU AGREE?
I'M AFRAID NOT, SISTER--
--YOU'LL RECALL THAT SAINT GENESIUS IS THE PATRON SAINT OF ACTORS AND COMEDIANS... JOKERS!
THE JOKER KIDNAPED HOOLEY EARLY--BEFORE HE COMMITTED THE REST OF THE MURDERS!
SO HE HAS TO HAVE HOOLEY HIDDEN...SOMEWHERE! ON SOME RAIN-SLICK STREET IN GOTHAM, THE JOKER HAS A HIDE-OUT...
WA-A-AIT! RAIN-SLICK... OF COURSE! IF I HADN'T BEEN SO BUSY CHASING AROUND, I'D HAVE SEEN THE OBVIOUS--
--AT LEAST WHEN I WIPED THE GOO OFF MY FACE!
ONE AREA WHERE THE JOKER COULD HAVE PICKED UP THAT PARTICULAR MIXTURE--CRUDE PETROLEUM AND SAND--
--AND IT'S A SPOT MADE TO ORDER FOR HIM! LONELY... ISOLATED--PERFECT!
I CAN BE THERE IN AN HOUR--AND I WILL BE!

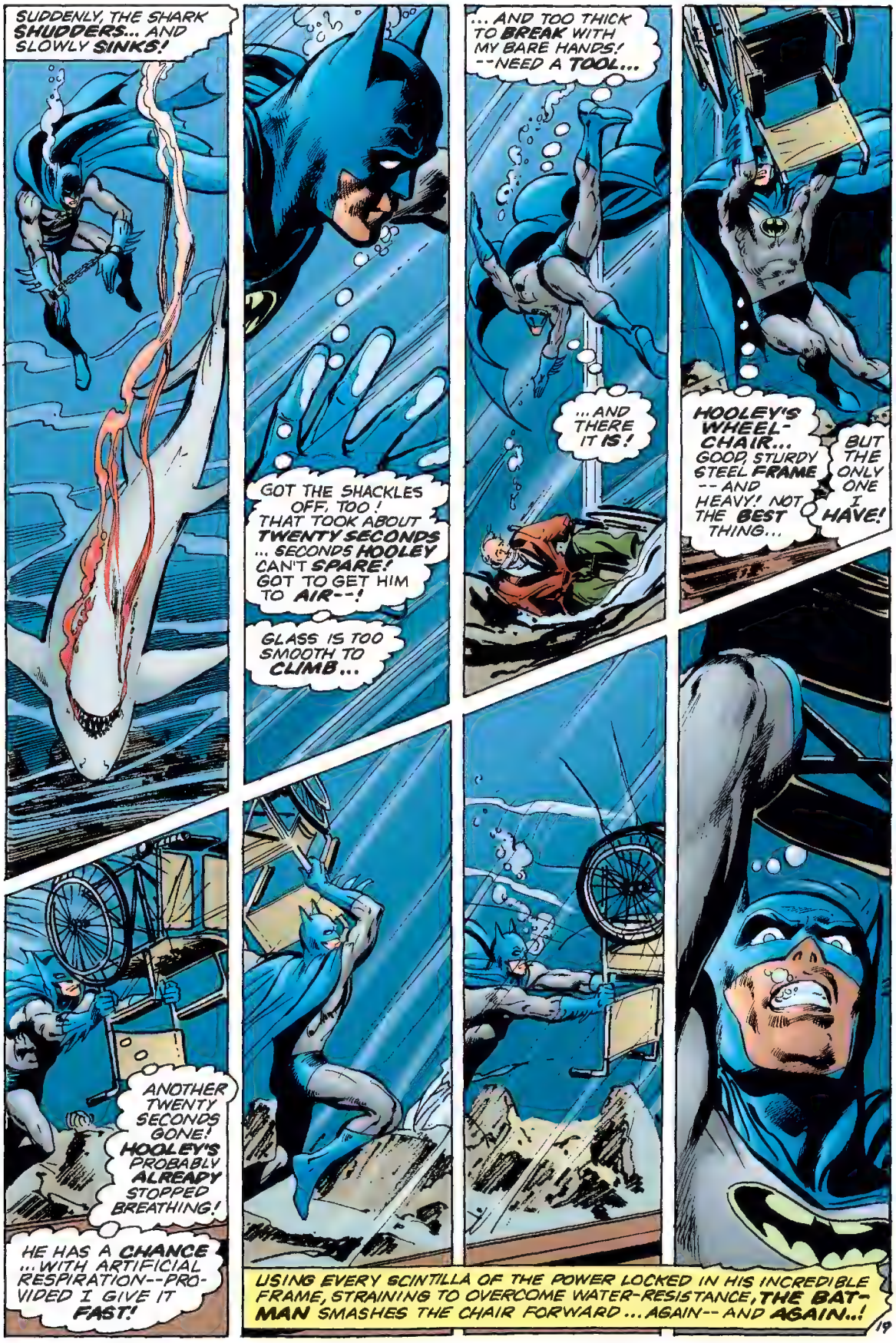

YESTERDAY, A SHIP --A TANKER-- RAN AGROUND JUST OFF GOTHAM ISLAND ... DUMPING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF CRUDE OIL INTO THE SEA!
THIS STORM HAS PREVENTED ANY CLEAN-UP EFFORT--
...AND THE WIND HAS BEEN PUSHING THE FOULED WATER TOWARD THE MAINLAND!
WHICH MEANS THE BEACHES ARE FULL OF IT... AND ANYONE WALKING ON THE BEACH WOULD HAVE SAND AND OIL ON HIS SHOES!-- AS THE JOKER DID!
CONTAMINATED BEACH!
KEEP OUT
LOGICALLY, HE'D HIDE HERE ... IN THE AQUARIUM BUILDING THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED LAST MONTH!
I HAVE A TINGLING AT THE BASE OF MY NECK... A FEELING OF DANGER!
--EXACTLY WHAT I WANT!
WITH NO EFFORT AT STEALTH, THE BATMAN BOLDLY ENTERS THE BUILDING... AND IS GREETED BY A PIERCINGLY CHILLING VOICE...
OH, BATMAN! YOU FOUND ME! I WAS CERTAIN YOU WOULD... AND I'M GLAD!
ANY PARTICULAR REASON, JOKER?
YES, YES... YES! ALL THE WHILE I WAS BEHIND BARS, I MISSED OUR CLASHES!
I DREAMED OF... HUMILIATING YOU-- IN A SPECIALLY HUMOROUS WAY!
HOW DOES A SHARK EAT, IF HE LOSES HIS TEETH? A SHARK CANNOT LOS HIS TEETH BECAUSE A TEETH ARE BROKEN O NEW ONES ROTATE AND GR
CARE TO BEGIN?
14

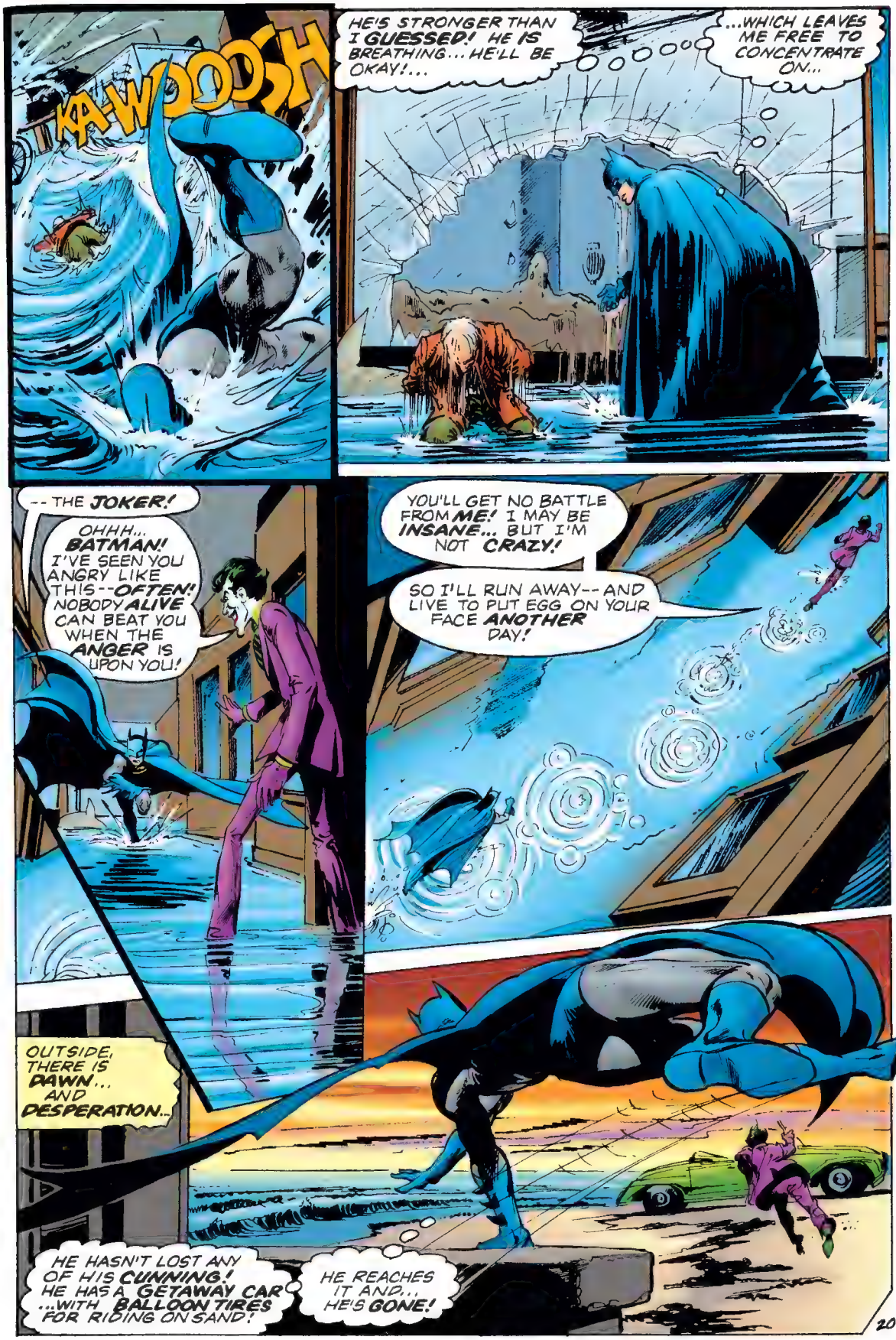
YES, YES...YES! TRY THIS!
A LAUGHING-GAS GRENADE? JOKER, YOU DISAPPOINT ME!
SURELY YOU EXPECTED ME TO EXPECT THAT PLOY! NATURALLY, I CAME PREPARED!
YOUR CHEMICAL ANTIDOTE? HOW WELL I RECALL THE TIME YOU INVENTED IT! OHHH... THIS IS FUN!
IN THE EXHIBITION HALL, I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU! A DELIGHT I'VE NEVER USED--
I CAN HARDLY WAIT!
DON'T SINK YOUR FIST INTO ME JUST YET, BATMAN! NOT TILL YOU SEE THE SURPRISE I PROMISED!
NOTICE I'M HOLDING A HANDLE ATTACHED TO A CHAIN--
AT THE OTHER END IS A PLATFORM... AND MY OLD ASSOCIATE HOOLEY! I YANK THE CHAIN AND HOOLEY FALLS INTO THE GLASS TANK BELOW!
BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M NOT MEAN! HE WON'T DROWN--

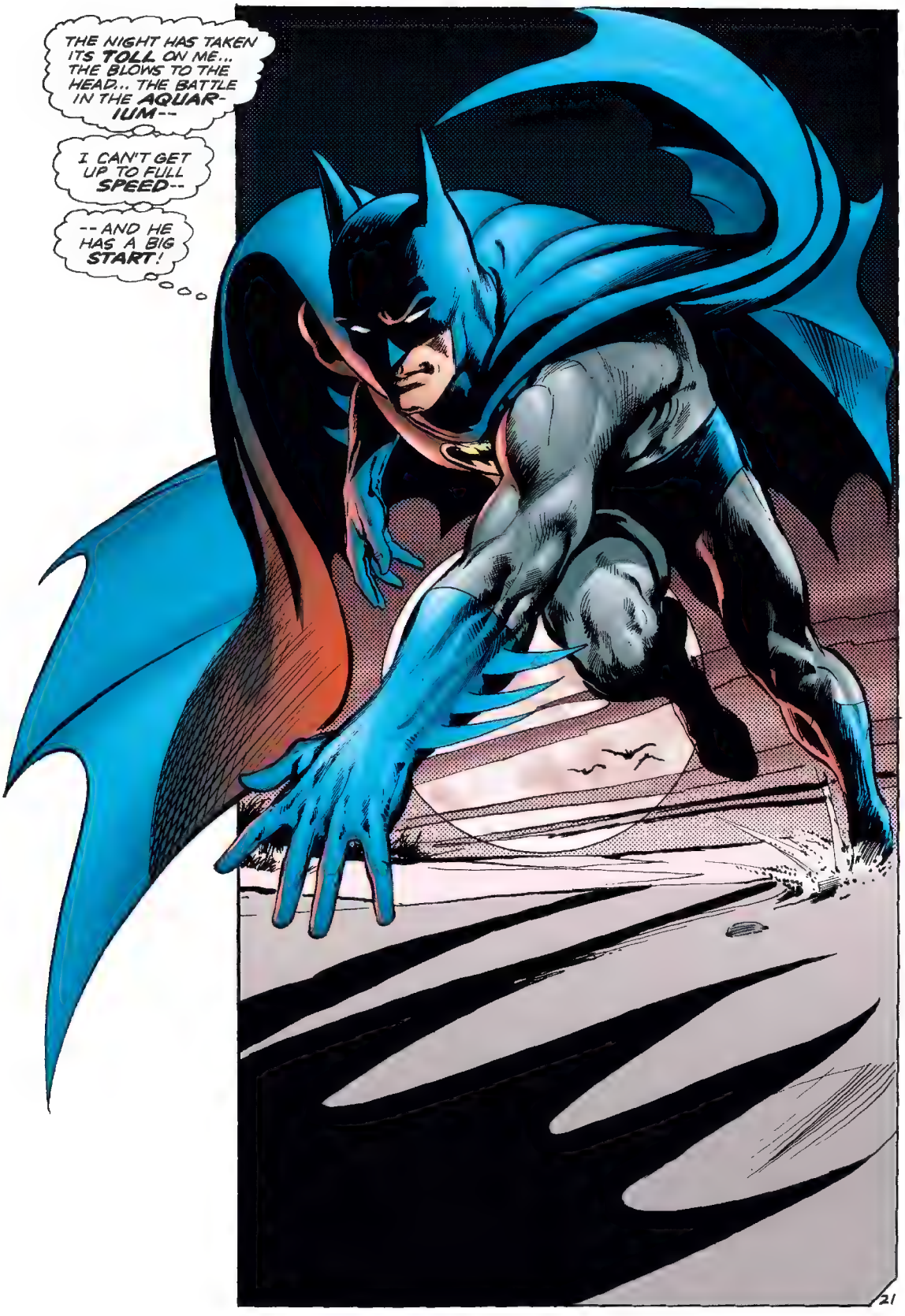

NO, HE'LL BE A MEAL FOR THE SHARK I FOUND HALF-DEAD ON THE BEACH! POOR FISHY WAS HURT BY THE OIL SPILLAGE!
NOW, FOR MY PROPOSITION! I'LL ALLOW HOOLEY TO LIVE IF YOU PERMIT ME TO MANACLE YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOU...
...AND THEN I GO SWIMMING WITH THE SHARK?
OHH... YOU ARE CLEVER! WELL-- WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?
PUT ON YOUR SHACKLE... AND ANSWER A LAST QUESTION!
FOR YOU-- ANYTHING!
WHY CHOOSE A SHARK AS THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR REVENGE?
TAKE A LOOK! WE RESEMBLE EACH OTHER!

JOKER--YOU REALIZE YOU'RE UTTERLY...HOPELESSLY...INSANE?
IT'S MY MOST CHARMING TRAIT!
BYE-BYE, BATMAN! HAVE A NICE DINNER... I MEAN--BE A NICE DINNER!
HA HA HA HA
FOR DESSERT, SHARKY CAN HAVE HOOLEY!
HAHAHAHA
YOU... PROMISED--
I'M A NOTORIOUS LIAR!
TA-TA, ALL!
HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HA
NEITHER OF US CAN LAST A MINUTE WITH THAT HUNGRY BEAST PURSUING US!
IT'S GOING FOR HOOLEY... ATTRACTED BY HIS BRIGHT RED JACKET!

I'VE NEVER HAD TO FIGHT SO UNPREPARED! I'VE NEVER MET A SEA PREDATOR IN HIS OWN ELEMENT!
STILL, THERE MAY BE A WORKABLE MANEUVER--
... USE THE CHAINLINKS TO PUT ITS TEETH OUT OF COMMISSION AND--
--HEAVE! HEAVE!! ...MAYBE SNAP ITS SPINE... OR SOMETHING!
BREAK, BLAST YOU!-- BREAK!!


SUDDENLY, THE SHARK SHUDDERS... AND SLOWLY SINKS!
GOT THE SHACKLES OFF, TOO! THAT TOOK ABOUT TWENTY SECONDS ... SECONDS HOOLEY CAN'T SPARE! GOT TO GET HIM TO AIR--!
GLASS IS TOO SMOOTH TO CLIMB...
... AND TOO THICK TO BREAK WITH MY BARE HANDS! --NEED A TOOL...
...AND THERE IT IS!
HOOLEY'S WHEEL-CHAIR... GOOD, STURDY STEEL FRAME -- AND HEAVY! NOT THE BEST THING...
BUT THE ONLY ONE I HAVE!
ANOTHER TWENTY SECONDS GONE! HOOLEY'S PROBABLY ALREADY STOPPED BREATHING!
HE HAS A CHANCE ...WITH ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION--PROVIDED I GIVE IT FAST!
USING EVERY SCINTILLA OF THE POWER LOCKED IN HIS INCREDIBLE FRAME, STRAINING TO OVERCOME WATER-RESISTANCE, THE BATMAN SMASHES THE CHAIR FORWARD ... AGAIN-- AND AGAIN..!


KA-WOOOSH
HE'S STRONGER THAN I GUESSED! HE IS BREATHING... HE'LL BE OKAY!...
...WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON...
-- THE JOKER!
OHHH... BATMAN! I'VE SEEN YOU ANGRY LIKE THIS--OFTEN! NOBODY ALIVE CAN BEAT YOU WHEN THE ANGER IS UPON YOU!
YOU'LL GET NO BATTLE FROM ME! I MAY BE INSANE... BUT I'M NOT CRAZY!
SO I'LL RUN AWAY-- AND LIVE TO PUT EGG ON YOUR FACE ANOTHER DAY!
OUTSIDE, THERE IS DAWN... AND DESPERATION...
HE HASN'T LOST ANY OF HIS CUNNING! HE HAS A GETAWAY CAR ...WITH BALLOON TIRES FOR RIDING ON SAND!
HE REACHES IT AND... HE'S GONE!


THE NIGHT HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON ME... THE BLOWS TO THE HEAD... THE BATTLE IN THE AQUARIUM--
I CAN'T GET UP TO FULL SPEED--
--AND HE HAS A BIG START!
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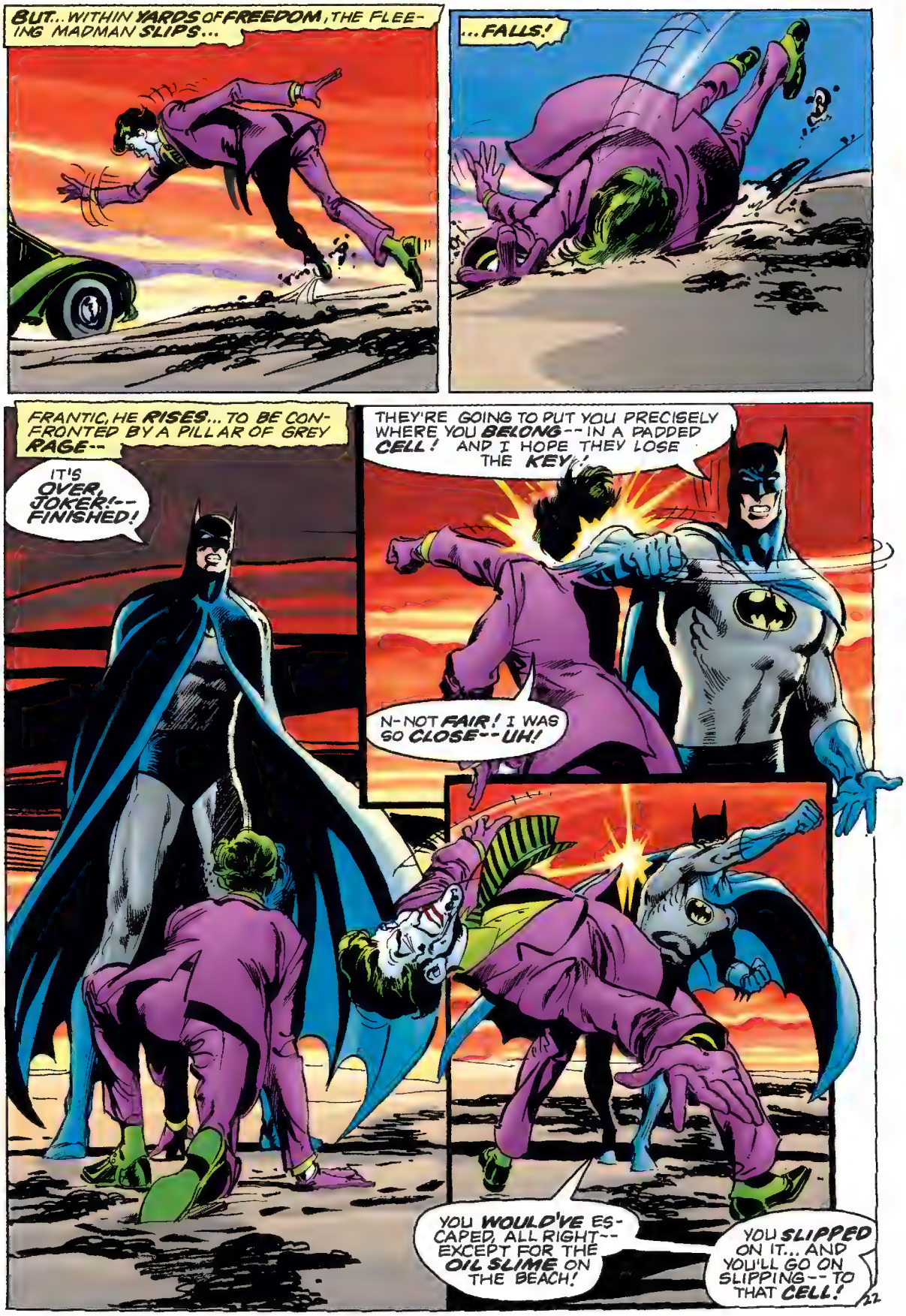
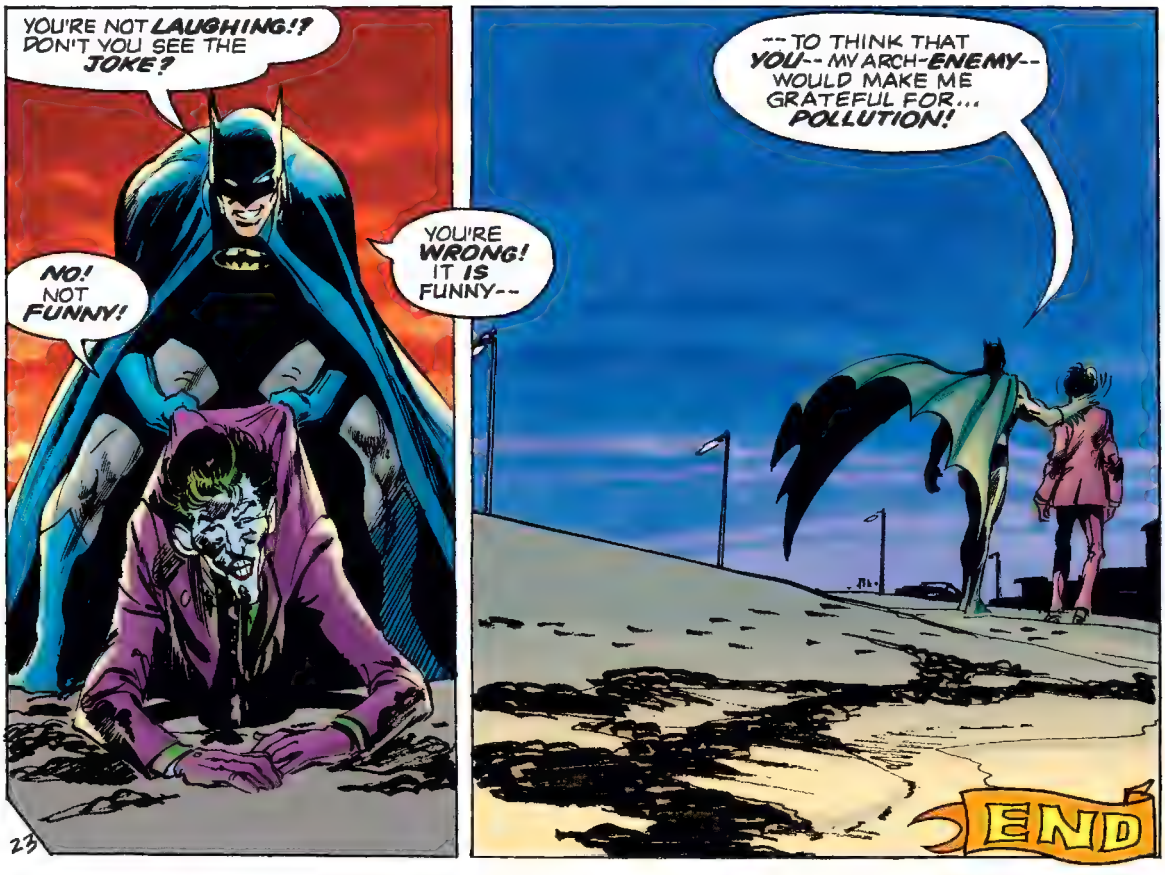
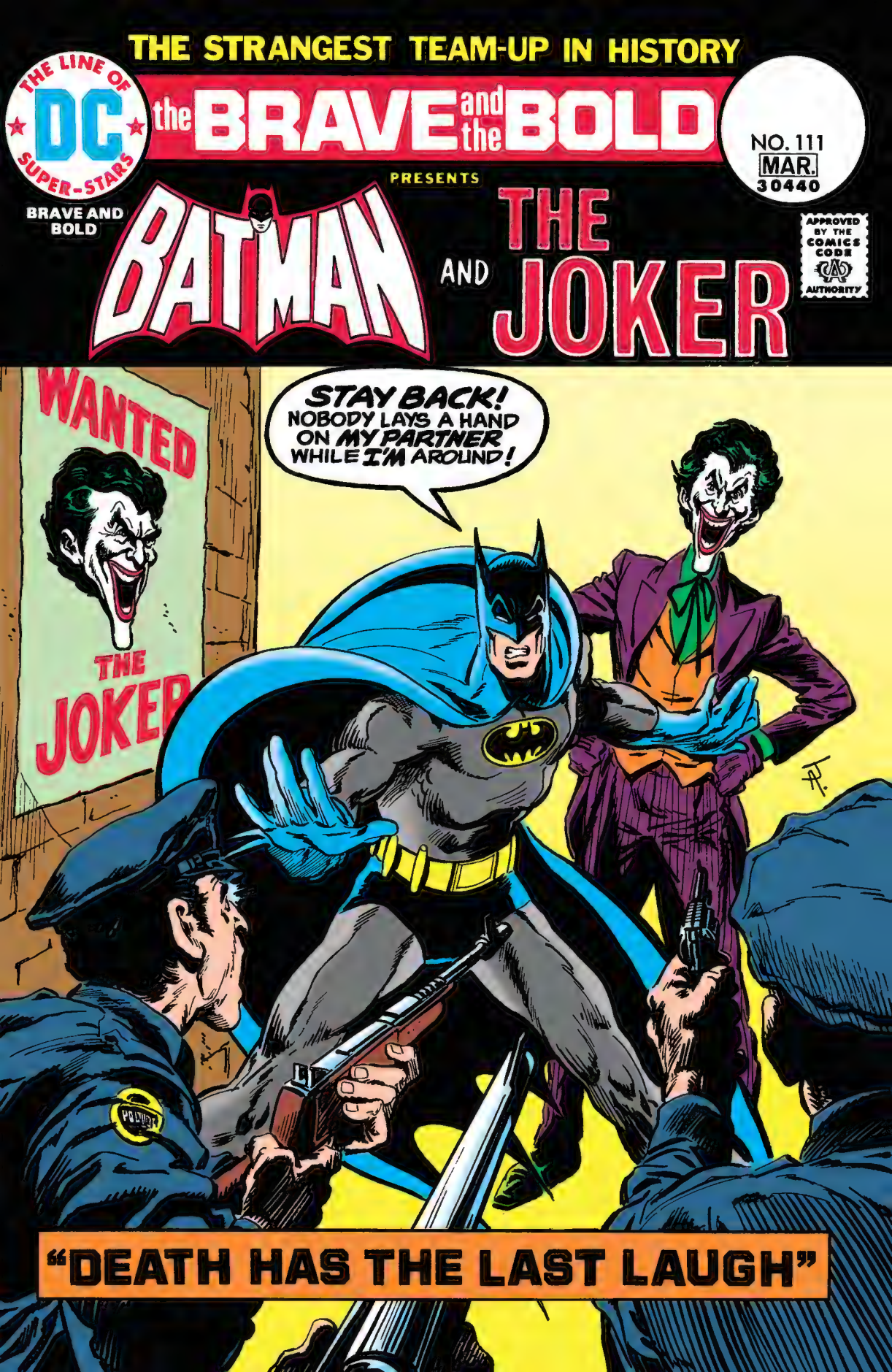

BUT... WITHIN YARDS OF FREEDOM, THE FLEEING MADMAN SLIPS...
...FALLS!
FRANTIC, HE RISES... TO BE CONFRONTED BY A PILLAR OF GREY RAGE--
IT'S OVER, JOKER!-- FINISHED!
THEY'RE GOING TO PUT YOU PRECISELY WHERE YOU BELONG-- IN A PADDED CELL! AND I HOPE THEY LOSE THE KEY!
N-NOT FAIR! I WAS SO CLOSE-- UH!
YOU WOULD'VE ESCAPED, ALL RIGHT-- EXCEPT FOR THE OIL SLIME ON THE BEACH!
YOU SLIPPED ON IT... AND YOU'LL GO ON SLIPPING-- TO THAT CELL!


YOU'RE NOT LAUGHING!? DON'T YOU SEE THE JOKE?
NO! NOT FUNNY!
YOU'RE WRONG! IT IS FUNNY--
--TO THINK THAT YOU-- MY ARCH-ENEMY-- WOULD MAKE ME GRATEFUL FOR... POLLUTION!
END


THE STRANGEST TEAM-UP IN HISTORY
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
BRAVE AND BOLD
the BRAVE and the BOLD
NO. 111
MAR.
30440
PRESENTS
BATMAN AND THE JOKER
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WANTED
THE JOKER
STAY BACK! NOBODY LAYS A HAND ON MY PARTNER WHILE I'M AROUND!
POLICE
"DEATH HAS THE LAST LAUGH"

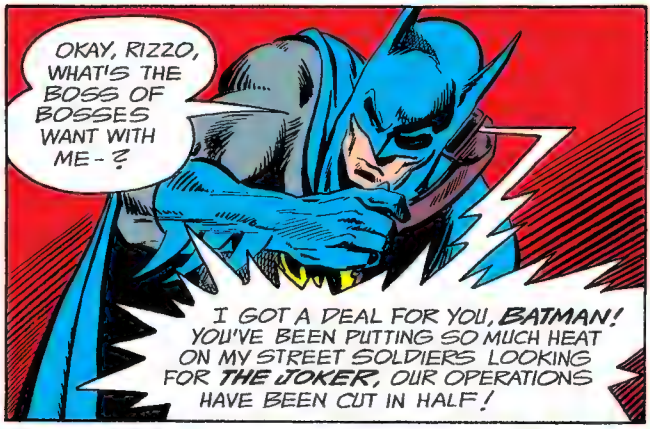
DEATH HAS THE LAST LAUGH
THE GREAT BATMAN HAS LOOKED INTO THE FACE OF GRIM DEATH MANY TIMES IN HIS OWN PERILOUS CAREER-- BUT NEVER, UNTIL THIS MOMENT, IN THE QUIET CONFINES OF A SUBURBAN HOME, HAS HE FELT THE HORROR, THE HATE, AND BITTER THIRST FOR REVENGE WHICH OVERWHELM HIM NOW!!
DEAD... THE WHOLE FAMILY... WIPED OUT AS THEY ATE! EACH ONE HOLDING A PLAYING CARD... A JOKER!
THE MURDEROUS SIGNATURE OF THEIR KILLER... OUR OLD ENEMY, THE JOKER!
BY GOD, JOKER--YOU'VE DONE YOUR LAST CRIMINAL ACT! I SWEAR THIS TIME TO HUNT YOU DOWN AND DESTROY YOU LIKE THE MAD DOG YOU ARE!!
STORY BOB HANEY • ART JIM APARO

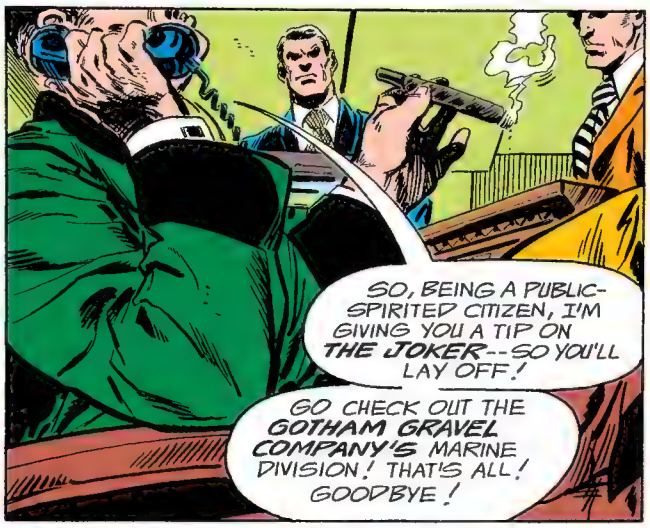
PART 1 "A BATMAN'S RAGE!"
THIS NOTE FOUND ON THE TABLE...
"I HAVE OBLITERATED THE NORTON FAMILY BECAUSE THEIR UPSTANDING LAW-AND-ORDER-MINDED FATHER DARED TO COME FORWARD AND FINGER EDDIE DOYLE..."
"...THUS SENDING DOYLE TO PRISON FOR LIFE! I NEVER KNEW DOYLE--BUT NORTON SHOULD HAVE MINDED HIS OWN BUSINESS!
LET THIS BE A WARNING TO ALL DO-GOODER CITIZENS THAT THE UNDERWORLD SHALL ALWAYS PROTECT ITSELF! SIGNED... THE JOKER!"
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! THE JOKER ADMITS HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW DOYLE!?
HATE AND PRIDE, COMMISSIONER! THE JOKER MEANS TO FILL THE LAW-ABIDING WITH TERROR AND FEAR--BECAUSE HE HATES NORMAL HUMANITY AND TAKES PRIDE IN HIS CRIMINAL LIFE!
BIZARRE... FANTASTIC!
THE JOKER IS BOTH, BUT I'M GOING TO GET HIM! HE'LL DIE MORE THAN FOUR DEATHS!
WITH SIRENS WAILING LIKE A MOURNING DIRGE, THE AMBULANCES CARRY AWAY THEIR GRIM CARGO...
WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
BATMAN... I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT REMEMBER, WE REPRESENT THE LAW... NOT OUR OWN PERSONAL EMOTIONS OR HATREDS! NO VIGILANTE STUFF!
I'M MAKING NO PROMISES! YOU'D BETTER CATCH THE JOKER BEFORE I DO... IF YOU WANT HIM ALIVE!

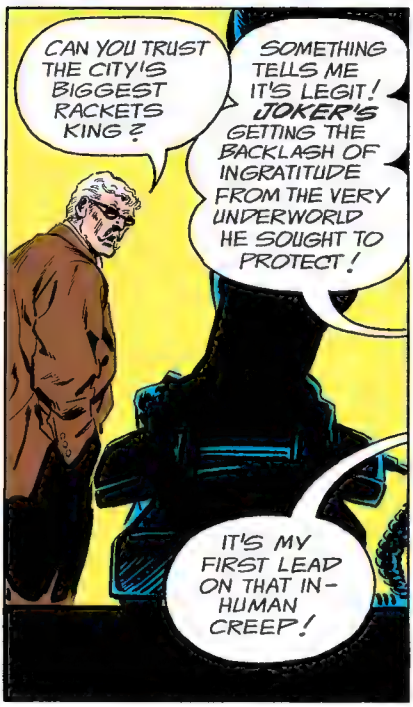
YES, AWESOME IS THE MASKED MANHUNTER'S ANGER, AND SWIFT HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS VENGEANCE AGAINST THE LAWLESS,,,
HA HA
HA
SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY THE JOKER'S LURKING,,, LAUGHING AT ALL THAT'S SACRED AND GOOD!
NOT LONG AFTER, AS A POLICE FREQUENCY RADIO CALLS BATMAN TO GOTHAM CITY'S MORGUE, LAST STOP FOR THE LOST, THE UNLOVED, THE UNLUCKY,,,
THE DEATH GRIMACE THE JOKER ALWAYS LEAVES ON HIS VICTIMS!? BUT HOW--?
EXTRAORDINARY! THESE FOUR NORTONS HAD NO WEIRD GRINS WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT HERE!?!
AND THEY HAD NONE WHEN THEY WERE FOUND! SO HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?
TAKE IT EASY, BATMAN! I JUST CAME ON DUTY AND SPOTTED THE CHANGE! THE NIGHT MAN, BRACKEN, MUST KNOW SOMETHING! HE'S PROBABLY STILL IN THE LOCKER ROOM--!
EMPLOYEES' LOCKER ROOM
HE'D BETTER TALK FAST AND STRAIGHT WHEN I GET MY GAUNTLETS,,,
,,,ON HIM!
UNNNNN!
WA
NOT MUCH LATER,,,
BRACKEN DIDN'T CONK YOU, BATMAN! WE JUST FOUND OUT HE WAS WAYLAID COMING TO WORK--SOMEBODY ELSE TOOK HIS PLACE HERE,,,
,,,AND USED THIS TO INJECT THE NORTONS WITH A POST-MORTEM DRUG!
3

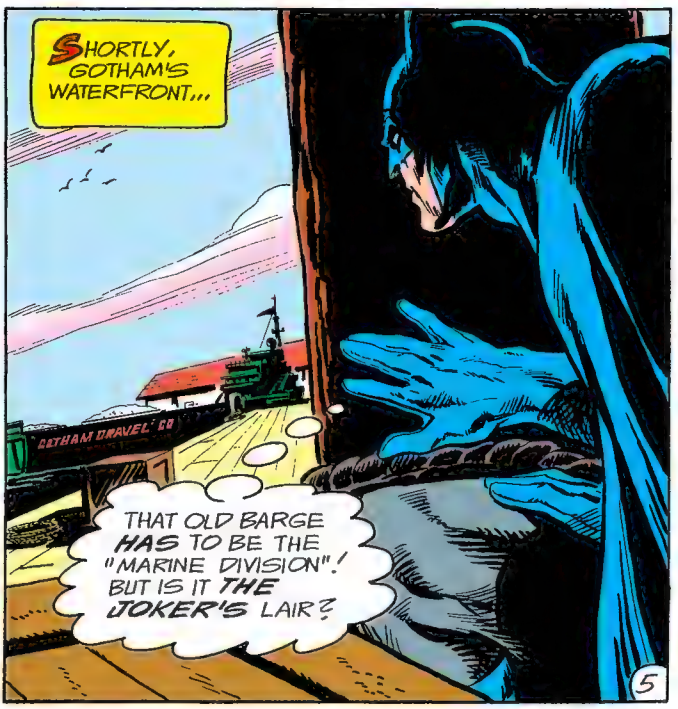
THE JOKER'S USUAL GIMMICK-- LEAVING THE VICTIM'S FACE WITH A HORRIBLE GRIMACE! BUT WHY DIDN'T HE DO IT BACK AT THE MURDER SCENE?
MAYBE THERE WASN'T TIME-- OR HE JUST FORGOT!
HE USUALLY DOESN'T, COMMISSIONER! ANYWAY, HE CAUGHT ME FLAT-FOOTED AND GOT CLEAN AWAY! BUT I MUST PICK UP HIS TRAIL--I MUST!
IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, THE MASKED MANHUNTER LISTENS...
HE TALKS...
HE PERSUADES...
HE BARGAINS...
POLICE
AND HE COMES UP WITH...
NOTHING! NOT A SINGLE CLUE TO THE JOKER'S WHEREABOUTS!
4

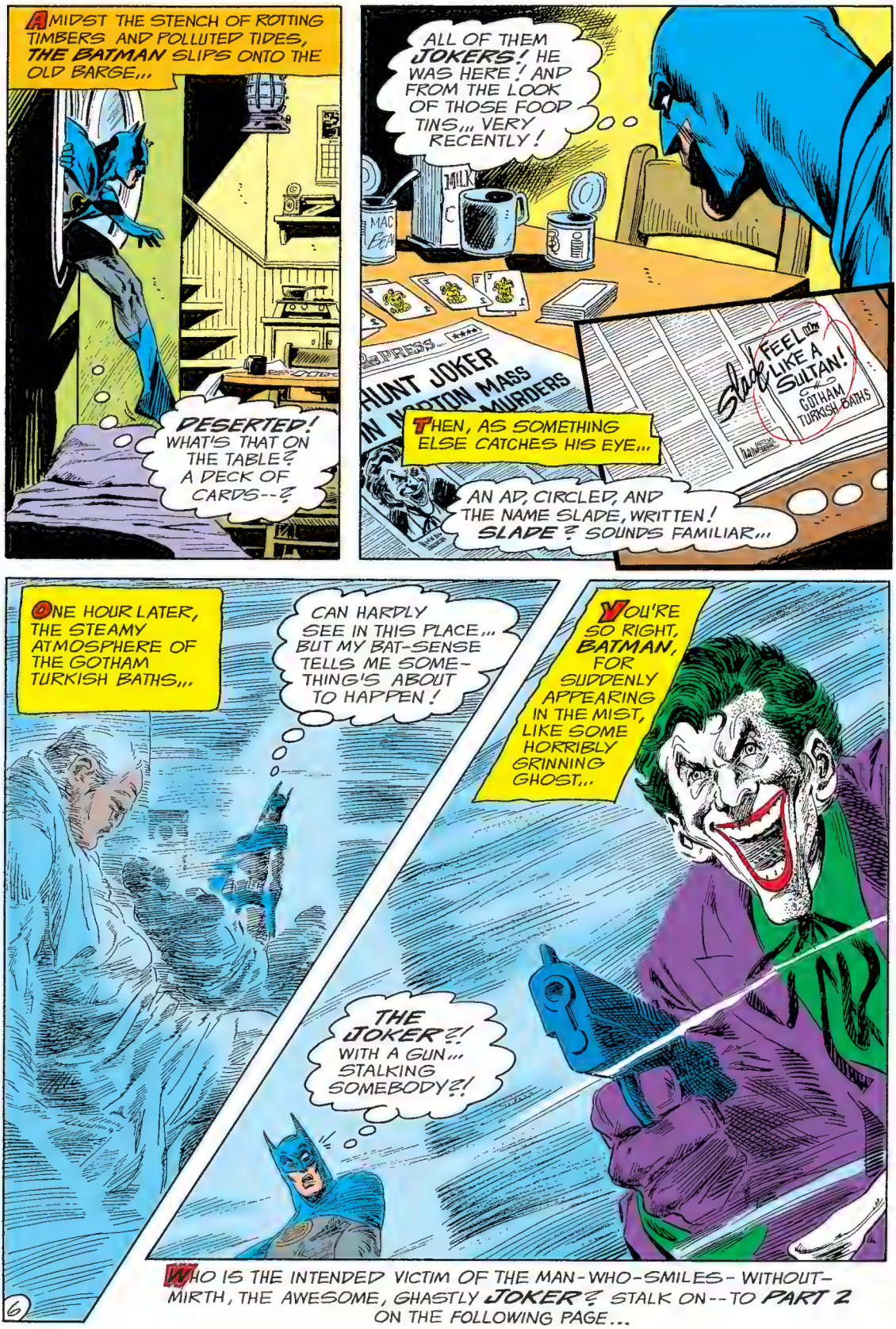
DAWN BREAKS, AND THE HOURS MELT INTO LATE MORNING, THEN...
ON THE BAT HOT-LINE... THE BIG SYNDICATE BOSS HIMSELF, RIZZO!
RIZZO!? THAT WAS ONE GUY I COULDN'T THREATEN WITHOUT STIRRING UP A LEGAL HORNETS' NEST!


OKAY, RIZZO, WHAT'S THE BOSS OF BOSSES WANT WITH ME-?
I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU, BATMAN! YOU'VE BEEN PUTTING SO MUCH HEAT ON MY STREET SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR THE JOKER, OUR OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN CUT IN HALF!


SO, BEING A PUBLIC-SPIRITED CITIZEN, I'M GIVING YOU A TIP ON THE JOKER--SO YOU'LL LAY OFF!
GO CHECK OUT THE GOTHAM GRAVEL COMPANY'S MARINE DIVISION! THAT'S ALL! GOODBYE!

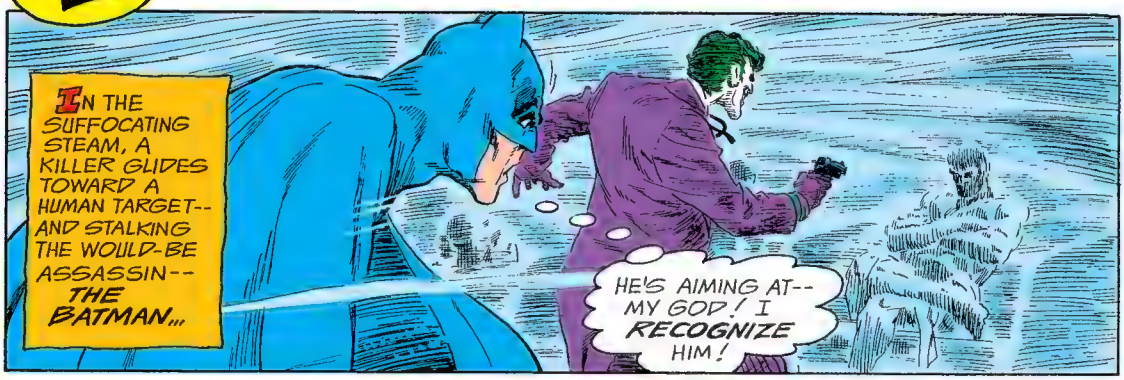

CAN YOU TRUST THE CITY'S BIGGEST RACKETS KING?
SOMETHING TELLS ME IT'S LEGIT! JOKER'S GETTING THE BACKLASH OF INGRATITUDE FROM THE VERY UNDERWORLD HE SOUGHT TO PROTECT!
IT'S MY FIRST LEAD ON THAT INHUMAN CREEP!

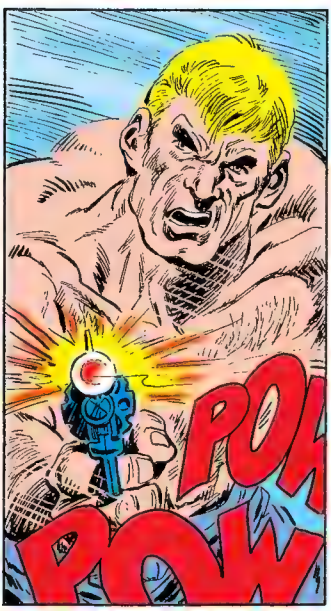

SHORTLY, GOTHAM'S WATERFRONT...
GOTHAM GRAVEL CO
THAT OLD BARGE HAS TO BE THE "MARINE DIVISION"! BUT IS IT THE JOKER'S LAIR?

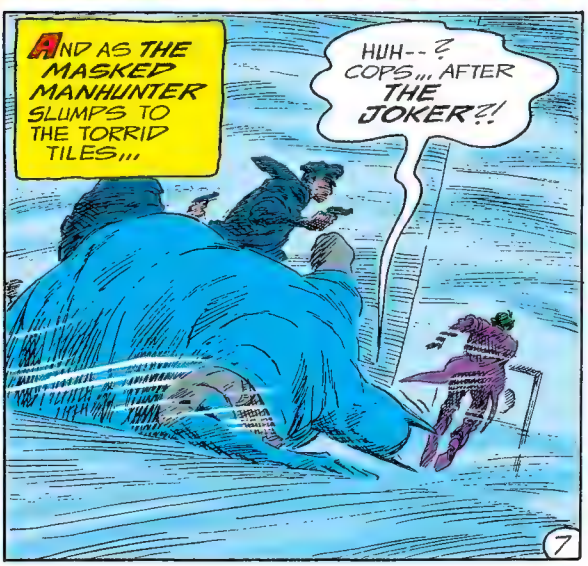


WHO IS THE INTENDED VICTIM OF THE MAN-WHO-SMILES-WITHOUT-MIRTH, THE AWESOME, GHASTLY JOKER? STALK ON--TO PART 2 ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE...

PART 2 "THE UNHOLY ALLIES"

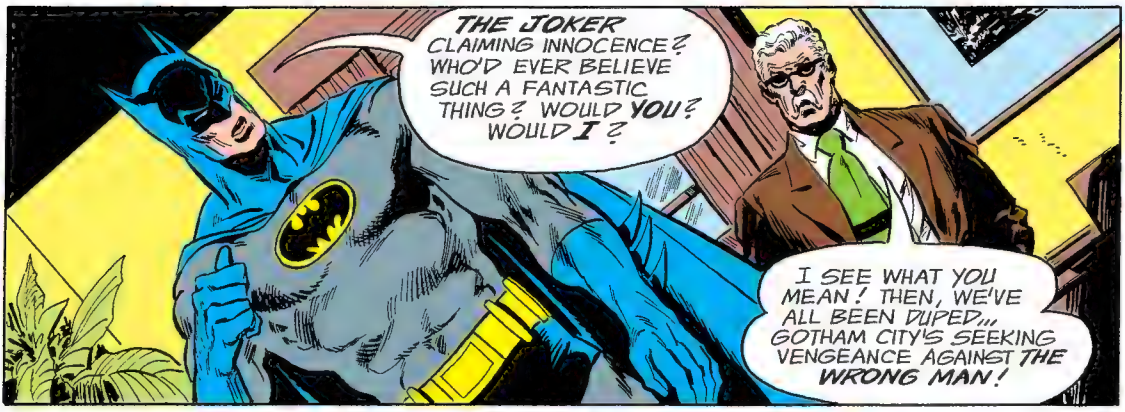






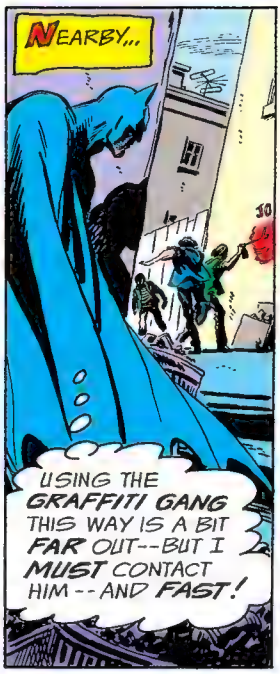
SHORTLY...
JOKER AND HIS PIGEON GOT AWAY! LUCKY FOR YOU IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND, AND I PUT A TAIL ON YOU SO WE ARRIVED IN TIME!
BLAST IT, GORDON--I DON'T WANT YOUR BOYS IN BLUE GETTING IN MY WAY!
NOW, YOU LISTEN! I'M NOT LETTING YOU CARRY ON A PRIVATE VENDETTA!
GOOD THING YOU'RE HURT... IT'LL KEEP YOU HERE WHILE MY DEPARTMENT BRINGS THAT KILLER TO JUSTICE-- LEGAL AND PROPER!
DON'T LET BATMAN STIR OUT OF THIS ROOM!
SOMETHING ODD ABOUT ALL THIS... I RECOGNIZED JOKER'S TARGET AS BURT SLADE, ONE OF THE UNDERWORLD'S TOP KILLERS!
BUT WHY WAS JOKER AFTER HIM? AND WHAT DID HE MEAN BY THOSE WORDS... "BATMAN, YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO!"?
GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE--!!
DONNING HIS COSTUME, THE BATMAN WEAKLY MOVES TOWARD THE WINDOW...
AN EASY LEAP FOR ME, NORMALLY--BUT NOW... WITH THIS HOLE IN ME, I'M NOT SURE! GOT TO TRY IT, ANYWAY!
THE NEXT MOMENT...
NOT GOING TO MAKE IT--!
8

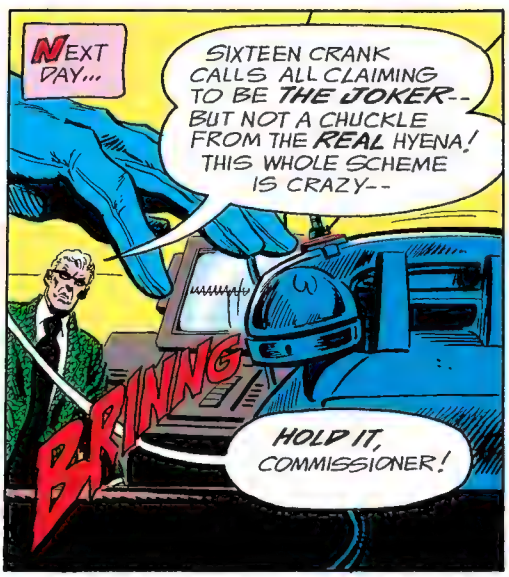
KRAAAAACCCH!
SOON, THE OFFICE OF GOTHAM CITY'S HARBORMASTER...
GOTHAM GRAVEL BARGE NUMBER 3, BATMAN... WHY, IT WAS A HUNDRED MILES UPRIVER LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT!
BLAZES! AND FROM THE COMPANY RECORDS, IT'S CLEAR JOKER WAS ABOARD, DISGUISED AS A BARGE TENDER!
SOON...
HAVE YOU FLIPPED YOUR COWL? HOW CAN YOU SAY THE JOKER DIDN'T KILL THE NORTONS??
WE WERE BLIND TO IT BEFORE! IT ALL ADDS UP! FIRST, JOKER WASN'T EVEN IN GOTHAM CITY THAT NIGHT!
SO HE COULD'VE HAD IT DONE BY A HENCHMAN!
NO, HE'S ALWAYS DONE HIS OWN KILLING-- AND HE NEVER SLIPPED UP LEAVING THE TELLTALE JOKER DEATH GRIN ON HIS VICTIMS-! RIGHT?
BUT SOMEBODY INFILTRATED THE MORGUE LATER TO GIVE THE BODIES THEIR DEATH GRIMACES IN A BETTER-LATE-THAN-NEVER TRY TO MAKE SURE WE'D LAY THE CRIME AT THE JOKER'S DOOR!
HMMM, YOU'VE GOT A POINT...
NOW ADD THAT TO THE FACT THE JOKER'S STALKING A KNOWN, VICIOUS KILLER, BURT SLADE... AND I'LL BET MY CAPE SLADE MASSACRED THE NORTONS AND PINNED IT ON THE JOKER!
AND JOKER'S GETTING EVEN? BUT WHY DIDN'T HE COME FORWARD IF HE'S INNOCENT?
9

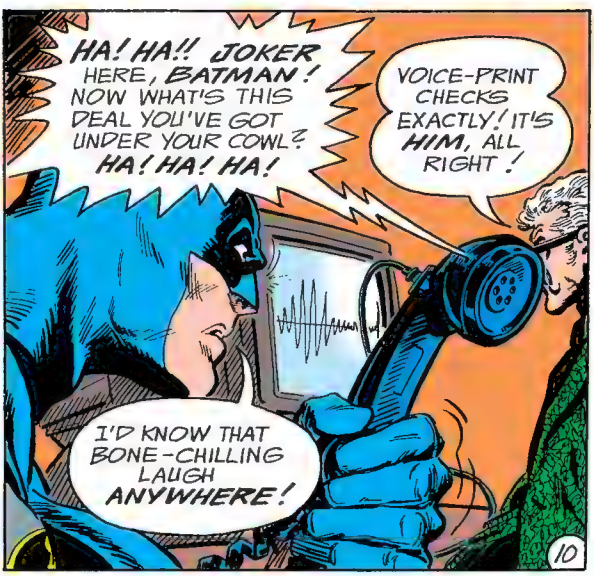

THE JOKER CLAIMING INNOCENCE? WHO'D EVER BELIEVE SUCH A FANTASTIC THING? WOULD YOU? WOULD I?
I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN! THEN, WE'VE ALL BEEN DUPED... GOTHAM CITY'S SEEKING VENGEANCE AGAINST THE WRONG MAN!

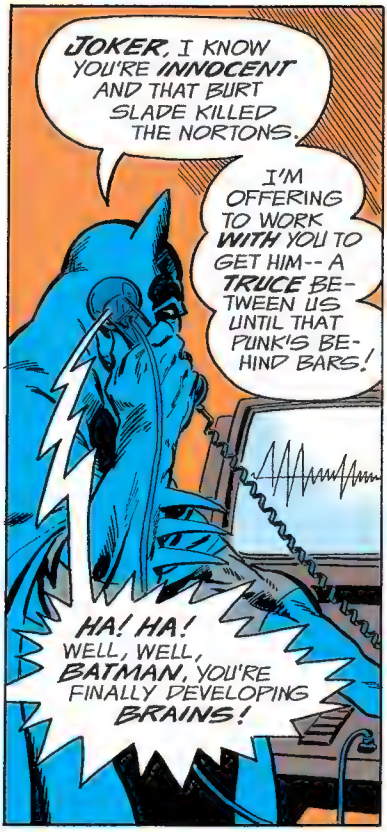
YES, AND IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO GET SLADE, I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING I NEVER DREAMED WAS POSSIBLE--MAKE A DEAL WITH MY OLDEST ENEMY... THE JOKER!
WHAT? YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!

BUT BATMAN IS SERIOUS, FOR SHORTLY...
JOKER! I KNOW THE TRUTH! LET'S TALK DEAL!
BATMA
MAN, IT'S WILD, BATMAN LAID REAL BREAD ON US TO COVER THE CITY WITH THIS MESSAGE!


NEARBY...
USING THE GRAFFITI GANG THIS WAY IS A BIT FAR OUT--BUT I MUST CONTACT HIM -- AND FAST!


NEXT DAY...
SIXTEEN CRANK CALLS ALL CLAIMING TO BE THE JOKER-- BUT NOT A CHUCKLE FROM THE REAL HYENA! THIS WHOLE SCHEME IS CRAZY--
BRRINNG
HOLD IT, COMMISSIONER!


HA! HA!! JOKER HERE, BATMAN! NOW WHAT'S THIS DEAL YOU'VE GOT UNDER YOUR COWL? HA! HA! HA!
VOICE-PRINT CHECKS EXACTLY! IT'S HIM, ALL RIGHT!
I'D KNOW THAT BONE-CHILLING LAUGH ANYWHERE!


JOKER, I KNOW YOU'RE INNOCENT AND THAT BURT SLADE KILLED THE NORTONS.
I'M OFFERING TO WORK WITH YOU TO GET HIM-- A TRUCE BETWEEN US UNTIL THAT PUNK'S BEHIND BARS!
HA! HA! WELL, WELL, BATMAN, YOU'RE FINALLY DEVELOPING BRAINS!

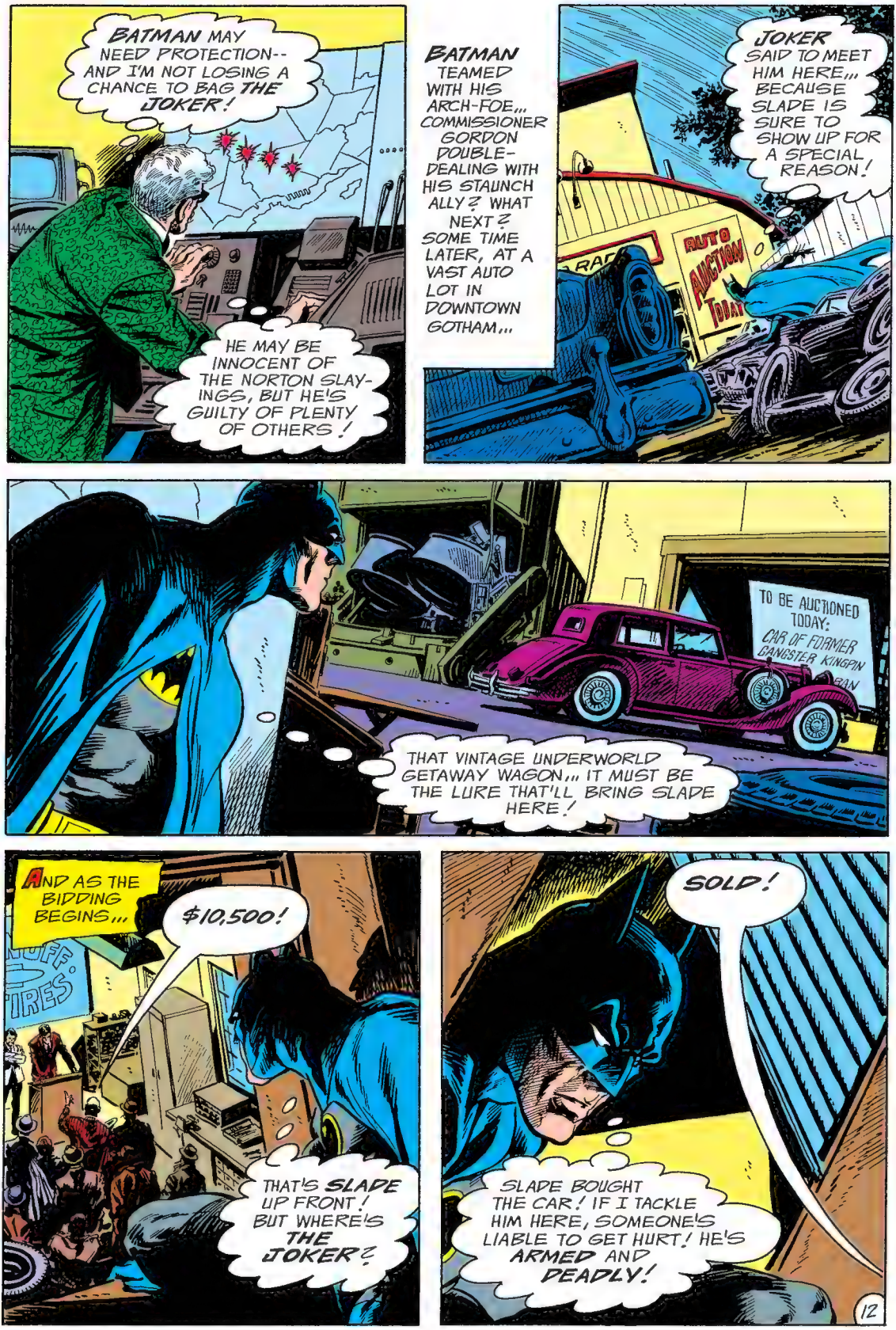
I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER--BUT NO TRICKS! AND NO POLICE! I HAVE A LEAD ON SLADE'S MOVEMENTS!
GO TO A PHONE BOOTH AT 179th STREET AND GOTHAM BOULEVARD!
I WILL CALL THERE EXACTLY AT 3 O'CLOCK! BE TALKING TO YOU, "PAL"! HA! HA! HA!

IT'S BEGUN! WE'RE NOW A TEAM! I'M OFF TO ESTABLISH FURTHER CONTACT-- BUT IF YOU PUT A TAIL ON ME, GORDON--
OKAY, OKAY-- BUT I NEVER DREAMED I'D LIVE TO SEE THIS DAY-- YOU WORKING WITH... THE JOKER!

GOT TO, OLD FRIEND! HE SEEMS TO HAVE INSIDE KNOWLEDGE OF SLADE AND HIS CRIMINAL HABITS!

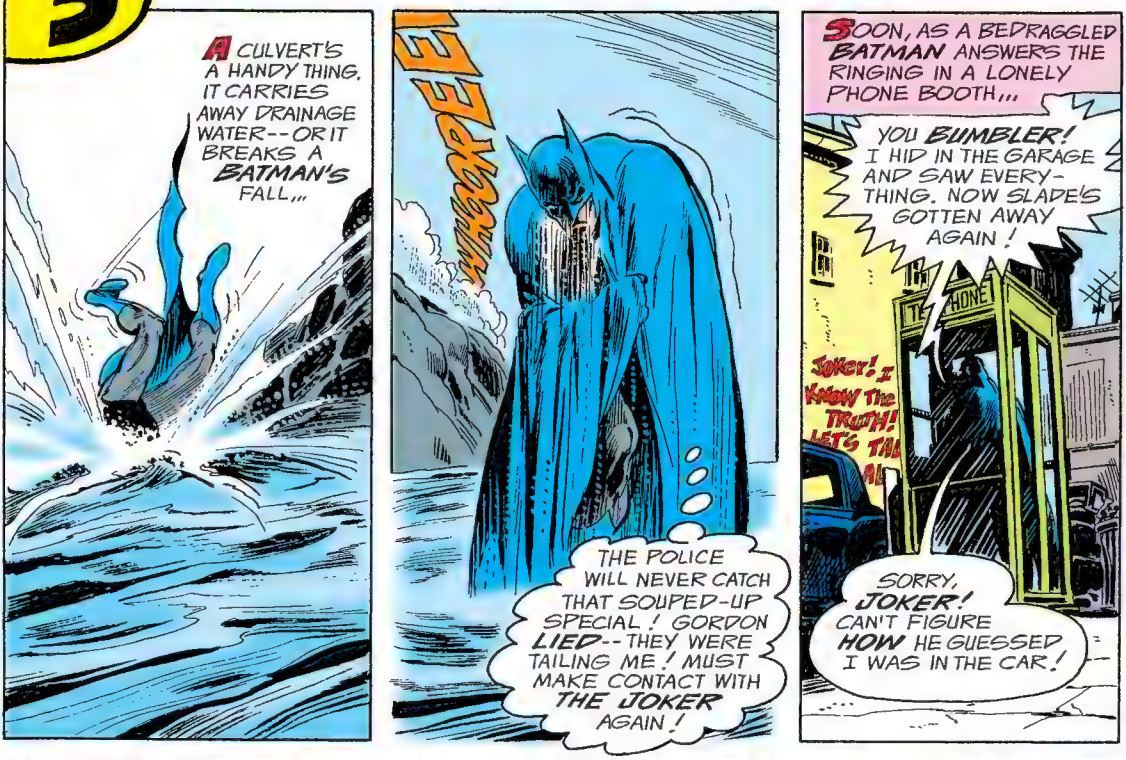
AND AS THE MASKED MANHUNTER HURTLES TO HIS STRANGE RENDEZVOUS...
HATED TO FIB TO BATMAN, BUT I DID PUT A "TAIL" ON HIM... NOT THE KIND HE'D SPOT!

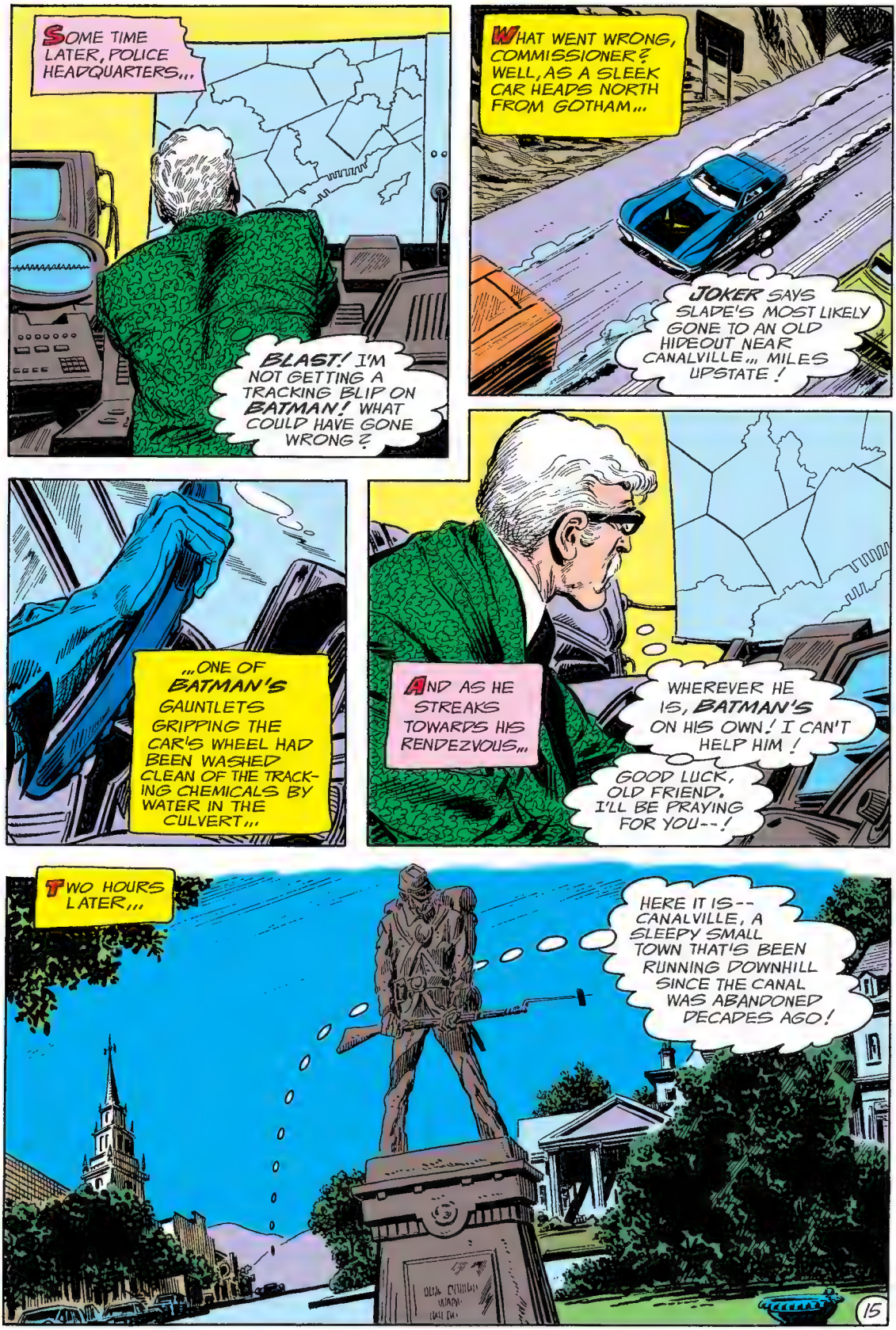
THE BAT-PHONE RECEIVER WAS COATED WITH INVISIBLE CHEMICAL PARTICLES, SO HIS ONE GAUNTLET WILL ACT AS A TRACKING LOCATOR!

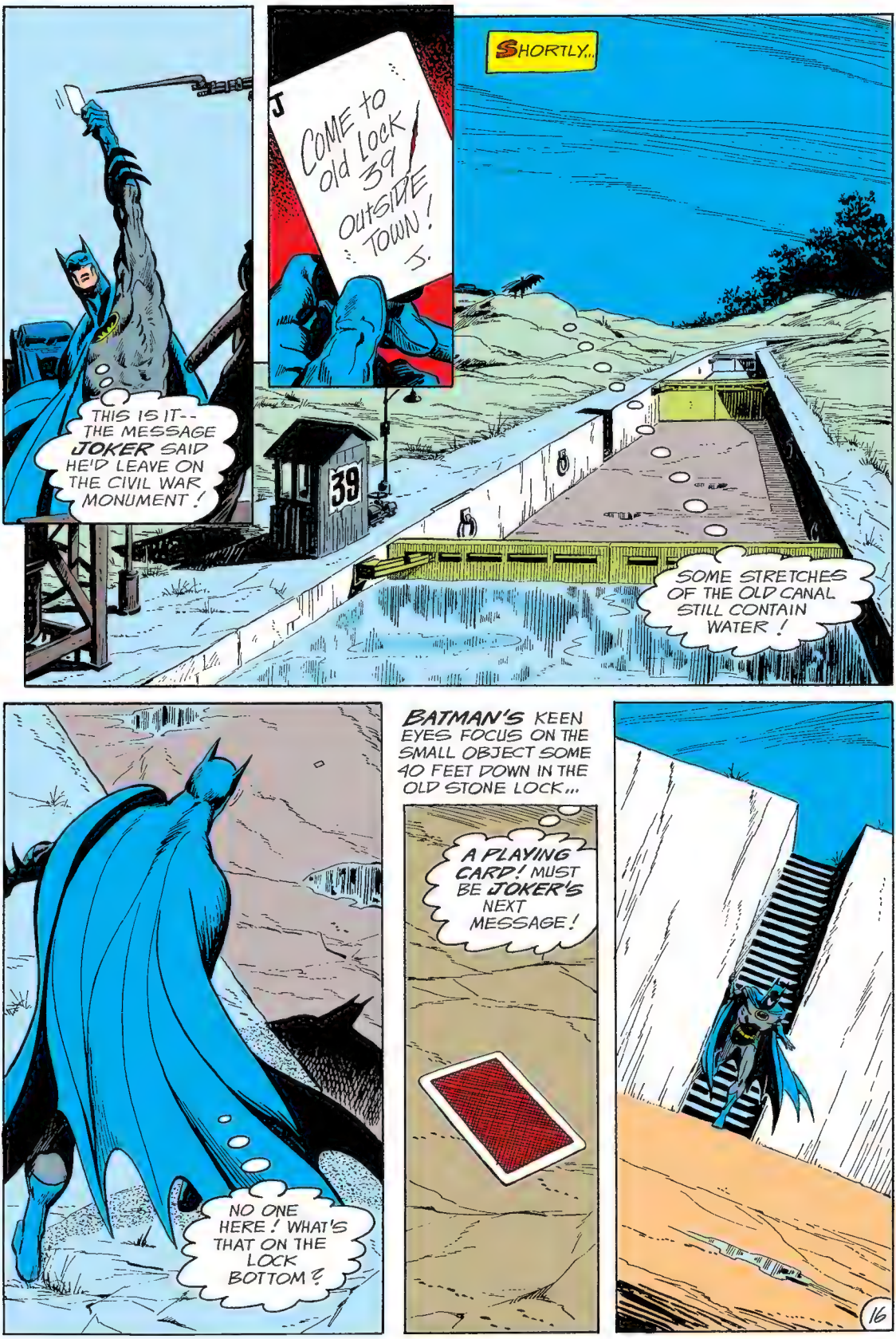

BATMAN MAY NEED PROTECTION-- AND I'M NOT LOSING A CHANCE TO BAG THE JOKER!
HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE NORTON SLAYINGS, BUT HE'S GUILTY OF PLENTY OF OTHERS!
BATMAN TEAMED WITH HIS ARCH-FOE,,, COMMISSIONER GORDON DOUBLE-DEALING WITH HIS STAUNCH ALLY? WHAT NEXT? SOME TIME LATER, AT A VAST AUTO LOT IN DOWNTOWN GOTHAM,,,
JOKER SAID TO MEET HIM HERE,,, BECAUSE SLADE IS SURE TO SHOW UP FOR A SPECIAL REASON!
AUTO AUCTION TODAY
THAT VINTAGE UNDERWORLD GETAWAY WAGON,,, IT MUST BE THE LURE THAT'LL BRING SLADE HERE!
TO BE AUCTIONED TODAY: CAR OF FORMER GANGSTER KINGPIN
AND AS THE BIDDING BEGINS,,,
$10,500!
THAT'S SLADE UP FRONT! BUT WHERE'S THE JOKER?
SOLD!
SLADE BOUGHT THE CAR! IF I TACKLE HIM HERE, SOMEONE'S LIABLE TO GET HURT! HE'S ARMED AND DEADLY!
12

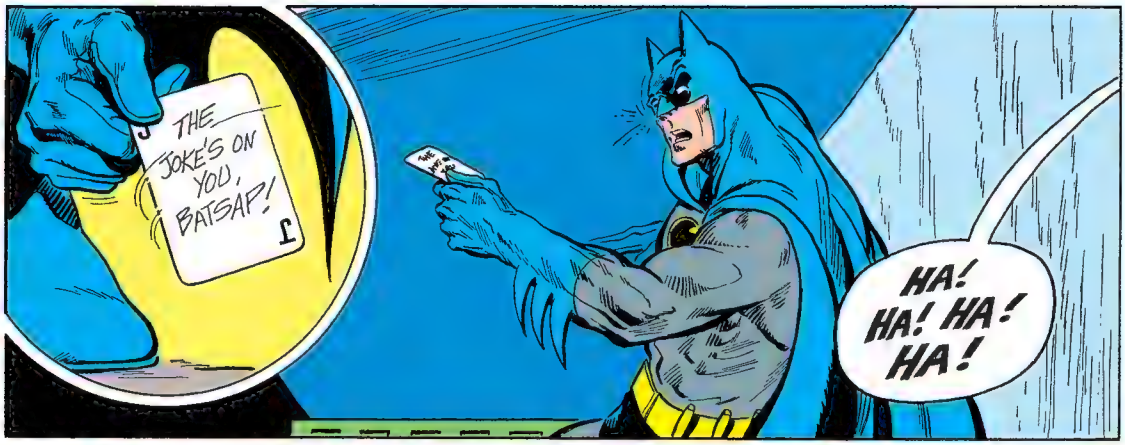
I'LL HIDE BACK HERE AND JUMP HIM AFTER HE TAKES THIS BABY ON THE ROAD!
TO BE A TODAY CAR OF FORM GANGSTER KIN BUGS MORA
SHORTLY...
IN ONE MINUTE, I'M GOING TO GIVE THIS MURDERING SCUM THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE--!
BUT SUDDENLY...
I'M PUTTING THE BULLET-PROOF GLASS PANEL BETWEEN US, BATMAN! YOU'RE TRAPPED!
SNIK
WHAT?! HE KNEW I WAS HERE--?!
NOW TO PUT ON A LITTLE SPEED! LET'S SEE YOU JUMP OUT OF THIS CHARIOT AT 80 OR 90, BIG MAN!
SKREEE
BUT JUST THEN...
WHOOOREEEEEE
COPS!!
AS THE BIG SEDAN SUDDENLY SLOWS FOR A SCREECHING TURN...
GOT TO TAKE A CHANCE AND EXIT!
SKK
EEEECCCH
BATMAN BAILING OUT AT 50 MILES AN HOUR--AND A GOOD PLACE TO PUT THE BRAKES ON PART 2! PART 3 CONTINUES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

PART 3 "THE GATES OF FEAR!"




SOME TIME LATER, POLICE HEADQUARTERS...
BLAST! I'M NOT GETTING A TRACKING BLIP ON BATMAN! WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG?
WHAT WENT WRONG, COMMISSIONER? WELL, AS A SLEEK CAR HEADS NORTH FROM GOTHAM...
JOKER SAYS SLADE'S MOST LIKELY GONE TO AN OLD HIDEOUT NEAR CANALVILLE... MILES UPSTATE!
...ONE OF BATMAN'S GAUNTLETS GRIPPING THE CAR'S WHEEL HAD BEEN WASHED CLEAN OF THE TRACKING CHEMICALS BY WATER IN THE CULVERT...
AND AS HE STREAKS TOWARDS HIS RENDEZVOUS...
WHEREVER HE IS, BATMAN'S ON HIS OWN! I CAN'T HELP HIM!
GOOD LUCK, OLD FRIEND. I'LL BE PRAYING FOR YOU--!
TWO HOURS LATER...
HERE IT IS--CANALVILLE, A SLEEPY SMALL TOWN THAT'S BEEN RUNNING DOWNHILL SINCE THE CANAL WAS ABANDONED DECADES AGO!
15

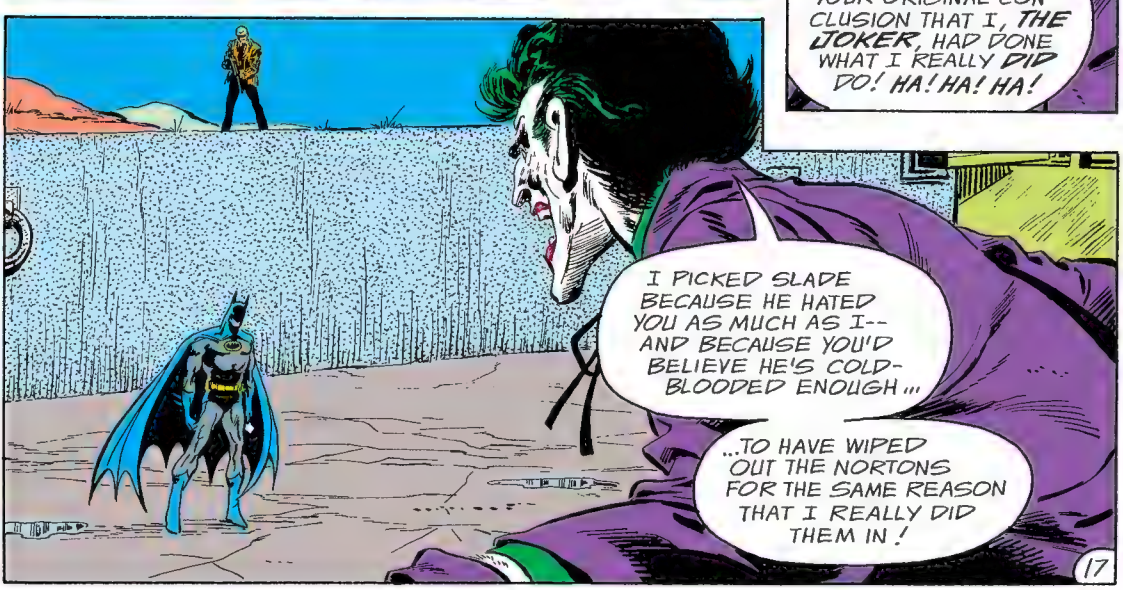

THIS IS IT-- THE MESSAGE JOKER SAID HE'D LEAVE ON THE CIVIL WAR MONUMENT!
J
COME to old Lock 39 OUTSIDE TOWN! J.
SHORTLY...
39
SOME STRETCHES OF THE OLD CANAL STILL CONTAIN WATER!
NO ONE HERE! WHAT'S THAT ON THE LOCK BOTTOM?
BATMAN'S KEEN EYES FOCUS ON THE SMALL OBJECT SOME 40 FEET DOWN IN THE OLD STONE LOCK...
A PLAYING CARD! MUST BE JOKER'S NEXT MESSAGE!
16


THE JOKE'S ON YOU, BATSAP!
HA! HA! HA! HA!

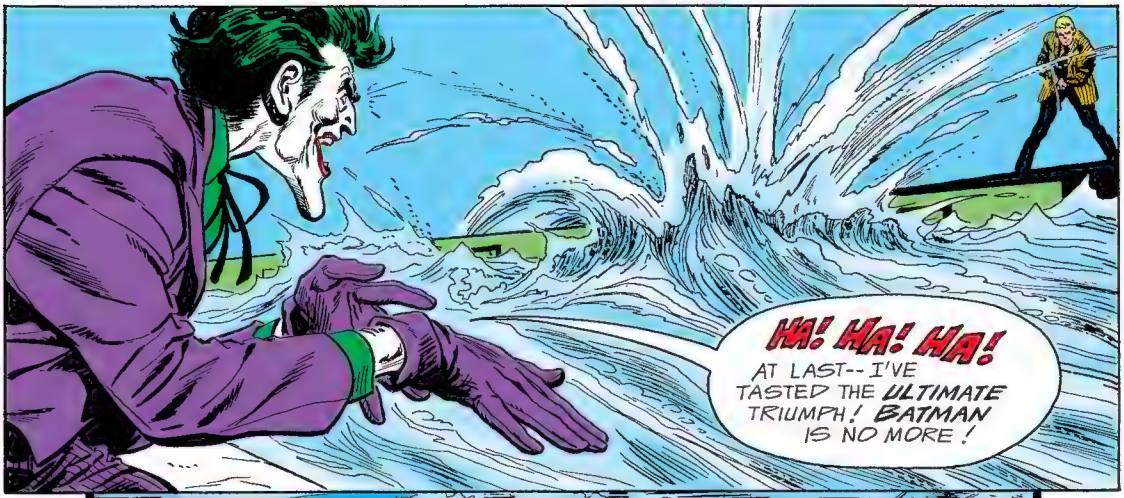
JOKER !?
YES, "PAL," AND YOU FELL NEATLY INTO MY TRAP-- FOR, MY MIGHTY, BRILLIANT CAPED CRUSADER, 'TWAS A TRAP ALL ALONG! HA! HA! HA!

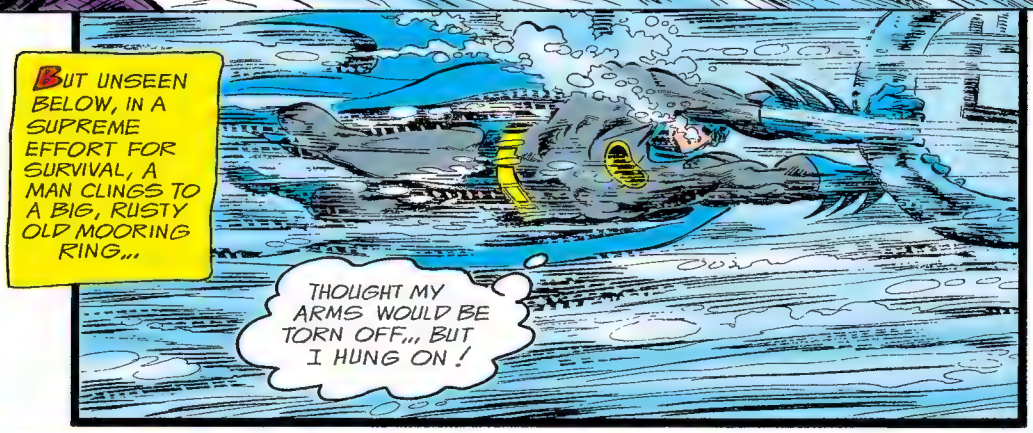
DON'T MOVE, BATMAN, OR YOU'RE DEAD!
BURT SLADE --?
MY PARTNER IN DELICIOUS CRIME! OF COURSE, I KILLED THE NORTONS MYSELF --AND THEN THREW SUSPICION ONTO SLADE BY FALSE CLUES!

PUTTING DEATH GRIMACES ON THE CORPSES, DOCTORING THE HARBORMASTER'S RECORDS, PRETENDING TO STALK SLADE,,, EVEN HAVING RIZZO GIVE YOU A PHONY TIP ON MY HIDEOUT,,,
,,,ALL WERE DESIGNED TO MAKE YOU DOUBT YOUR ORIGINAL CONCLUSION THAT I, THE JOKER, HAD DONE WHAT I REALLY DID DO! HA! HA! HA!


I PICKED SLADE BECAUSE HE HATED YOU AS MUCH AS I-- AND BECAUSE YOU'D BELIEVE HE'S COLD-BLOODED ENOUGH,,,
...TO HAVE WIPED OUT THE NORTONS FOR THE SAME REASON THAT I REALLY DID THEM IN!

AND I DID THE REST-- TEAMING UP WITH YOU SO YOU COULD TRAP ME HERE LIKE A RAT! WHAT A PRIZE FOOL I WAS!
YES, THE FIRST TWO TRAPS WE SET WERE FOILED BY YOUR FRIEND GORDON AND HIS LITTLE HELPERS!
BUT THIS FINAL TRAP WILL BE SPRUNG WITHOUT THEIR TIMELY INTERFERENCE...
THUSLY!
THE LOCK GATES ARE OPENING, BATMAN, AND YOUR LIFE IS CLOSING-- ENDED BY TONS OF CRUSHING WATERS! HA! HA! HA!
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE MASKED MANHUNTER IS SWEPT UP LIKE A TWIG BY THE WALL OF ONRUSHING WATER...
I'LL BE SMASHED FLAT AGAINST THE OPPOSITE DOORS!!


HA! HA! HA!
AT LAST-- I'VE TASTED THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH! BATMAN IS NO MORE!


BUT UNSEEN BELOW, IN A SUPREME EFFORT FOR SURVIVAL, A MAN CLINGS TO A BIG, RUSTY OLD MOORING RING...
THOUGHT MY ARMS WOULD BE TORN OFF... BUT I HUNG ON!

SUDDENLY...
HUH? HE'S ALIVE?!-- UNNNGH!!
KAPOW
ALIVE AND KICKING, SLADE!

HE GOT SLADE... NOW HE'S COMING FOR ME!

BATMAN'S OWN CAR!
HA-HA-HA! I'LL STEAL IT... AND LEAVE HIM IN MY DUST!!
WHY WON'T IT START? WHY?
IT MUST START! IT MUST!
THE NEXT INSTANT...
YAAAAAHH! PLEASE... MERCY...
YOU MURDEROUS SWINE--I SHOULD END YOUR FOUL LIFE WITH MY OWN HANDS...
BUT THAT WOULD GIVE YOU A FINAL VICTORY, MAKING ME INTO A KILLER LIKE YOURSELF!
THE CAR... WOULDN'T START... I COULD HAVE ESCAPED...
NO WAY, YOU GHASTLY CLOWN!
THE IGNITION'S CONTROLLED BY THIS PHONY RADIO WHICH IS REALLY A KEY PUNCH SAFETY DEVICE -- BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE CODE... JUST 6 LITTLE LETTERS! LIKE SO!
BATMAN
GUESS THE LAST LAUGH'S ON YOU, JOKER! HA! HA! HA!
THE END

DC 100 PAGES

BATMAN

BAT MAN

NO. 260

FEB.

31515

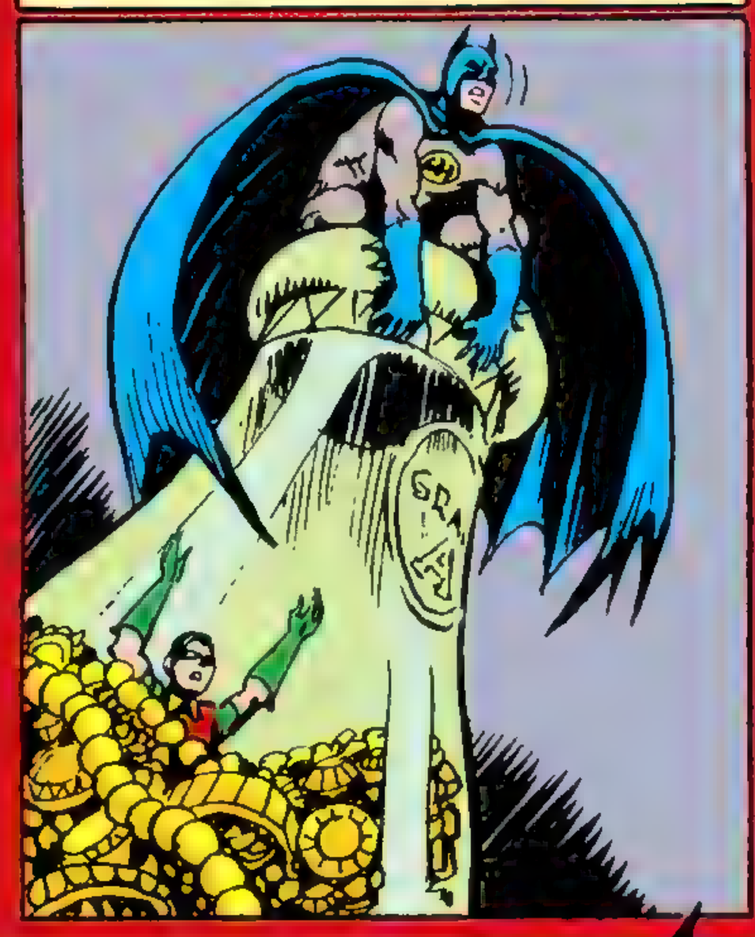
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

NEW!

BATMAN'S DEADLY BATTLE AGAINST THE JOKER!

"THE RIDDLER'S PRISON-PUZZLE PROBLEM!"

"THE GRADE A CRIMES!"



ALFRED IN A SOLO BAFFLER... "THE PEARL OF PERIL!"

THIS IS THE DETECTIVE BOOK THAT CHALLENGES..

...BATMAN AND THE MYSTERY ANALYSTS!

WHAT IS THE CATWOMAN DOING IN "THE CASE WITHOUT A CRIME"?

A NEW BATMAN THRILLER

HEY, *BATMAN*, HEARD ANY GOOD ONES LATELY? YOU KNOW -- *JOKES! YOKS! GAGS! BOFFOLAS!* WELL, *WE HAVE!* ALL ABOUT THIS *JOKER*, SEE-- AND HOW HE DOES THIS HILARIOUS *REVENGE* BIT:

KNOW WHO HIS *VICTIM* IS? HANG ON, *BATMAN*, THIS'LL *GRAB* YOU! THE VICTIM IS-- *READY, BATMAN?*--THE VICTIM IS ***Y-O-U!***

Story: DENNY O'NEIL
Art: IRV NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO
Editing: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

WAIT--DON'T GO *'WAY*--NOT TILL YOU'VE HEARD THE *PUNCH LINE!* NO *KIDDING*--

"This One'll KILL YOU, BATMAN!"

CHAPTER 1: "AND IF I LAUGH..."

AT THE EDGE OF *ARKHAM, NEW ENGLAND,* STANDS A FOREBODING STRUCTURE-- HOME OF THE MOST *DANGEROUS* MEN ALIVE-- THE ASYLUM FOR THE *CRIMINALLY INSANE*--

ARKHAM HOSPITAL

INSIDE, ALL IS *ROUTINE!* NO ONE CAN *GUESS* THAT *CHAOS* IS ABOUT TO ERUPT...

HERE'S YOUR *JAVA*, AL!

THANKS, PETE! SAY, YOU SEEN TODAY'S *PAPER?* THE NEWS IS *GRIM!*

...WAR-THREATS... ENERGY CRISIS... GUYS GETTIN' *BRIBED!* IT'S...

...IT'S THE *FUNNIEST*... *HEE HEE HEE*... *FUNNIEST* DARN STUFF...

HA-HA-HA HA-HA-HA!

AND *ELSEWHERE,* THE INSTITUTION'S MOST *FAMOUS* INMATE IS BEING SERVED *SUPPER*--

YOUR *FAVORITE, JOKER*... *HEH HEH HEH HEH*... FAVORITE *FOOD*--!

SOMETHING TICKLING YOUR WARPED SENSE OF *HUMOR,* GUARD?

C-C-CAN'T S-STOP *L-LAUGHING*... *HAHAHAHA*...

YOU'RE HAVING SUCH A *GOOD TIME*...

...YOU MIGHT LOSE YOUR *KEYS!*

HERE-- I'LL *HOLD* THEM FOR YOU!

HA HA HA HA!

ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO LEAVE THROUGH THIS KITCHEN DOOR AND HOP IN THE *CAR* MY ACCOMPLICE PLANTED--

I'VE TAKEN CARE OF YOUR CAR, *JOKER*-- NOW I'M TAKING CARE OF *YOU*!

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE--AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE... EVEN WHEN THE *LAUGH'S* ON HIM!

THE BATMAN--! I ANTICIPATED YOU'D "*CRASH*" MY *COMING-OUT PARTY!*

THAT'S WHY I INVITED SOME OTHER GUESTS--

--MY FELLOW-INMATES WHOSE CELL DOORS I UNLOCKED ON THE WAY OUT!

THEY TELL ME THEY'RE *CRAZY* TO MEET YOU!

SNARLING, THE MADMEN *CHARGE*...

HOW DELIGHTFUL! WHATEVER HAPPENS TO *THE BATMAN*, THE *LAW* CAN'T HOLD THESE *HOMICIDAL MANIACS* RESPONSIBLE!

3

THE FIRST TWO *STOP* AS THOUGH HIT WITH A *WALL!*

A *MASTER* OF UNARMED COMBAT IS *THE BATMAN... KUNG FU--*

--AND *JUDO...*

...AND AIKIDO...

...AND PLAIN OLD *FISTICUFFS--!*

BUT THE ODDS ARE A *DOZEN* TO *ONE...* AND HIS FOES FIGHT WITH THE DESPERATE STRENGTH OF *MADNESS!*

STILL, HE *MIGHT WIN--*

--EXCEPT FOR A TREACHEROUS ATTACK FROM *BEHIND!* THE HEAVY COFFEE URN *STRIKES*... AND AS *THE BATMAN FALLS*, HE IS SPLASHED WITH *SCALDING LIQUID*--

HA HA HA--

COME *ON*, MARCUS!

YEAH... SOON AS I STOMP HIM TO *DEATH!*

HOWEVER...

SORRY, MARCUS--

--YOU'RE A *FRIEND*... AND *THE BATMAN* IS AN *ENEMY!*

NEVERTHELESS, I *CAN'T* LET YOU *KILL* HIM!

TWO-FACE--?!

IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO *THANK* ME, *BATMAN--DON'T!*

I *HAD* TO SAVE YOU!

I TOSSED MY *COIN--*

--AND THE *GOOD* SIDE LANDED FACE UP!

BELIEVE ME, IF THE *BAD SIDE* HAD, I'D HAVE *HELPED* HIM KILL YOU!

THEN IT WAS *YOU* WHO TIPPED ME THE *JOKER* WAS PLANNING AN *ESCAPE!*

YES... I *OVERHEARD* HIM SCHEMING TO LOAD THE GUARD'S COFFEE WITH HIS *LAUGHING DRUG!*

I TOSSED THE *COIN* AND...

...AND AGAIN THE *GOOD* SIDE *WON!*

EXACTLY! MAYBE I OUGHT TO GET A *NEW* COIN!

THIS ONE HAS A NASTY HABIT OF BRINGING OUT THE *BEST* IN ME!

LATER, IN THE PENTHOUSE ATOP THE *WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING* IN THE HEART OF *GOTHAM CITY*...

I STILL CAN'T SEEM TO CLEAR MY *HEAD,* ALFRED!

I DON'T *WONDER,* MASTER BRUCE! YOU'VE A *WRETCHED* BUMP!

IT'S NOT *THAT--*

--I'D NEED A *COMPUTER* TO COUNT THE *SKULL KNOCKS* I'VE TAKEN... AND I'VE *NEVER* EXPERIENCED SYMPTOMS LIKE *THESE!*

I MUST HAVE SWALLOWED A *LOT* OF THE DRUGGED *COFFEE... HA HA...*

...AND I'M AFRAID IT MAY HAVE... *HA HA...* *AFFECTED* ME SOMEHOW!

FUNNY, DON'T YOU THINK?--

--BEING BEATEN BY A COUPLE OF GALLONS OF *COFFEE?*

ANYWAY, HOLD THE *FORT,* ALFRED! *HA-HA-HA--*

I'M PLAYING *SAFE* AND SEEING *DR. HAMISH!* HE'S AN *EXPERT* IN BIZARRE CHEMICALS!

6

THEN, AT A NEARBY *LABORATORY*...

GOOD *EVENING*, DOCTOR!

WHO... *THE BATMAN--!*

YOU *STARTLED* ME!

WHAT BRINGS *YOU* HERE?

I GOT A MASSIVE DOSE OF THE *JOKER'S DRUG* AND, FRANKLY, IT HAS ME *WORRIED!*

IT *SHOULD!* I'VE *STUDIED* THE PREPARATION... *NASTY STUFF!*

ONLY TWO MEN IN THE *WORLD* ARE QUALIFIED TO PREPARE AN *ANTIDOTE--*

--DOCTOR ROCKWELL IN *LONDON* IS ONE...

...AND, FORTUNATELY, *I* AM THE *OTHER!*

R-RINNGG!

EXCUSE ME, SOMEONE'S AT THE *DOOR!*

FLOWERS FOR *DR. HAMISH!*

BUT I DIDN'T ORDER ANY--

THAT'S *YOUR* PROBLEM, DOC!

MMM... THEY *ARE* LOVELY... *FRAGRANT...*

DOCTOR... I DON'T LIKE THE *SMELL* OF THIS!

GET *RID* OF 'EM-- *QUICK!*

BUT BEFORE THE SCIENTIST CAN *OBEY--*

T-SSSSSS

G-- GAS...

CHOKE

DOCTOR!

AGHH

7

HE'S *DEAD!*

A *CARD* DROPPED FROM THE BOUQUET!

EVEN BEFORE I *LOOK*, I KNOW IT MUST BE--

--A *JOKER!*

JOKER

THAT CLOWN MAY VARY HIS TRICKS--BUT NOT HIS *M.O.!*

HOW *DROLL*-- TO USE AN OLD *PRACTICAL JOKE* TO SNUFF THE MAN WHO COULD *HELP* ME!

...*NO!* FUNNY IT'S *NOT!* I'VE GOT TO NAB A *MURDERER!*

THE PHONY *DELIVERYMAN* CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN TOO *FAR*--

THERE HE *IS*... JUST *STANDING THERE!*

WHAT'S HE DOING --WAITING FOR A *BUS?*

NO... *BATMAN*-- JUST WAITIN' FOR *YOU!*

I'M GONNA FINISH THE JOB I STARTED AT THE *ASYLUM!*

MY WOULD-BE *STOMPER*--*MARCUS!*

OKAY, CREEP-- YOU'VE HAD *YOUR* SWING--

8

--MY TURN NOW!

AND ANOTHER FOR GOOD MEASURE--!

HA! THAT'S A LAUGH-- REACHING FOR A GUN!

GO AHEAD-- IT'D BE MY PLEASURE TO WRECK YOU!

NO GUN! THE BOSS SAID THAT IF YOU CAUGHT ME I WAS TO GIVE YOU THIS--

A POCKET-SIZED TAPE-RECORDER!

YEAH... WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE JOKER!

CLICK!

LISTEN, BATMAN-- THIS ONE'LL KILL YOU!

THAT DRINK OF COFFEE YOU HAD IN THE ASYLUM WAS DRUGGED! ITS EFFECTS WILL KEEP INCREASING... AND IN 72 HOURS YOU'LL LAUGH YOURSELF TO DEATH!

A FITTING REVENGE FOR THE JOKER, YOU WILL AGREE..?

9

REE-*DICULOUS!* HE EXPECTS ME TO *BELIEVE* HIS CRAZY STORY?

IF *DR. HAMISH'S* MURDER WEREN'T SO *TRAGIC*--

--I WOULD *LAUGH*--

--IN FACT, I *WILL!*

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

LAUGHTER... GALES OF HOWLING *MIRTH* SHUDDER THROUGH THE NIGHT--

--AND END IN A HORRIFIED *GASP!* *THE BATMAN* WHISPERS HARSHLY...

IT'S *TRUE!*

IT *MUST* BE... *ALL TRUE!*

THE *JOKER* SAID I HAVE *THREE DAYS!*

PLENTY OF TIME TO *BATJET* TO *LONDON*...

... AND TO CONSULT WITH THE *DR. ROCKWELL* THAT *HAMISH* MENTIONED!

BUT BEFORE I LEAVE, I MUST PAY MY LAST RESPECTS!

LAST RESPECTS? HOW *AMUSING!*

A CHUCKLE RISES IN HIM... A *GUFFAW*... AND HIS BODY *TREMBLES* WITH THE TREMENDOUS EFFORT OF KEEPING THE TERRIBLE SOUND LOCKED WITHIN --!

10

CHAPTER 2: "...'TIS THAT I MAY NOT WEEP!"

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, *THE BATMAN*, IN HIS *BRUCE WAYNE* IDENTITY, VISITS A *FUNERAL HOME*...

I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL *RESPONSIBLE* FOR *DR. HAMISH'S* DEATH--

THE *JOKER* MURDERED HIM JUST TO PREVENT HIM FROM SAVING MY LIFE!

HOW *FUNNY* HE LOOKS LYING IN THAT COFFIN--

..*VERY FUNNY*...!

WHA-HA-HA!

M-MASTER BRUCE--?

HURRY, ALFRED--GET ME TO...*HAHAHA* ...AIRFIELD... HA-*HA*-HA!

IN LESS THAN AN HOUR, *THE BATMAN* IS AIRBORNE AND LOST IN THOUGHT...

THANK GOD...THE *GHOULISH LAUGHTER* IS OVER...FOR THE PRESENT...

PHONED *DR. ROCKWELL*--

--AND HE'S STANDING BY TO TREAT ME...

LONDON-- A THICK FOG MASKS A CAPED FORM STEALING SILENTLY ALONG AN EXCLUSIVE STREET TOWARD THE ROCKWELL RESIDENCE..

IT'S SO SILENT... I'M HAVING TROUBLE BELIEVING I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A *METROPOLIS!*

HELP!

UH-OH...NOT SILENT ANY *LONGER!*

I HAVE AN UGLY HUNCH I KNOW WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT *WINDOW*--

--THE *JOKER*... AND TWO OF HIS *STOOGES!*

BATMAN, ESQUIRE! WE'VE BEEN *EXPECTING* YOU!

K-RASH!

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, STOOGES-- *EXECUTE* THEM!

WE'RE TO PLAY *GOOD GUY* VERSUS *THUGS*, HUH?

TIRESOME...

...BUT AT LEAST THE *EXERCISE* KEEPS ME IN *SHAPE!*

HA!--THAT WASN'T A BAD *QUIP!*

IN *FACT*, I CONSIDER MY HUMOR... *HA-HA-HA...*

HI-HI-HILARIOUS!

13

LIGHTS OUT FOR *YOU*, BUDDY! *HO-HAH-HAA!*

HOO-BOY... THE *WORSE* THE JOKES GET, THE *HARDER* I LAUGH!

A *KARATE-CHOP* IN THE *LIVER* FOR YOU, *BATMAN!*

HEY-- THAT GIVES ME--

--*CHOPPED LIVER!*

HAHAHA... *JOKER*--YOU'RE *TOO MUCH!*

THAT'S USING YOUR *HEAD!*

HA HA-HA-HA-HA-

DOUBLED UP FROM LAUGHTER... CAN'T CONTROL MYSELF...

I COULD FINISH YOU NOW--BUT YOU STILL HAVE SOME TIME REMAINING BEFORE THE *FUN-FILLED FINALE!*

WHACK!

MEANWHILE, HERE'S SOMETHING TO KEEP YOU AMUSED--

--IT'S AN IDEA IN THE *COMEDY MANNER!*

I *CHALLENGE* YOU TO FIGURE OUT WHERE THE DOCTOR AND I WILL BE AT *MIDNIGHT*, WHEN I *SLAY* HIM!

THEN... TRY TO STOP ME... IF YOU *CAN!*

HAHAHA... CAN HARDLY WAIT... TO DO... JUST *THAT!*

14

AGONIZING MOMENTS LATER...

:WHEW:- AS IF I DON'T HAVE PLENTY OF PROBLEMS *ALREADY*... HE GIVES ME A *PUZZLE* TO SOLVE!

WHERE DO I LOOK--? WHAT DID HE SAY?-- AN "IDEA IN THE *COMEDY MANNER*"...

GOT IT--*JOKER* HID HIS CLUE IN A *PUN!*

COMEDY MANNER EQUALS *COMEDY MANOR*--

--A *THEATRE*, ONCE A RENOWNED *LONDON MUSIC HALL* WHERE THE *GREATS* CONVULSED AUDIENCES ...ENTERTAINERS LIKE *CHAPLIN*, *FIELDS*, THE *MARX BROTHERS*...

...NOW DARK AND SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE SCURRYING OF RATS AND THE GROAN OF ANCIENT TIMBERS...

...STANDING LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLY OLD *DOWAGER* REMEMBERING YOUTH, BEAUTY, *GAIETY*...

...HOSTESS THIS SHROUDED NIGHT TO *THE BATMAN*...

MY TRANSLATION OF THE *JOKER'S* CLUE WAS *RIGHT!* THE *DUST* HAS BEEN RECENTLY *DISTURBED!*

HE PROBABLY EXPECTS ME TO SNEAK IN BY *WINDOW* OR *ROOF*--

--SO I'LL *SURPRISE* HIM BY BOLDLY WALKING IN THE *FRONT* ENTRANCE!

AHH... I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T DISAPPOINT ME, *BATMAN*--!

15

READY-- SHOW'S ABOUT TO BEGIN! NOW...

...LOOK AT DR. ROCKWELL-- BOUND IN A *GUILLOTINE!*

WHICH REMINDS ME--YOU KNOW WHAT A *GUILLOTINE* IS?

--A *PERMANENT CURE* FOR DANDRUFF!

THAT'S A...HA HA HA... *T-TERRIBLE* J-JOKE!

OBSERVE...THE ROPE HOLDING THE BLADE IS NEXT TO A BURNING *CANDLE!*

IN PRECISELY *THREE MINUTES--*

--THE FLAME WILL BURN DOWN TO THE ROPE...

...AND THEN...

...THE BLADE WILL *DROP* AND PART THE DOC'S *HAIR*-- TO HIS *ANKLES!*

AND YOUR HOPE FOR A LIFE-SAVING *CURE* WILL BE *KAPUT!*

H-H-HORRIBLE... HA HA HA HA HA

NATURALLY YOU'LL WANT TO *SAVE* HIM! BUT YOU *WON'T*... BECAUSE I'LL KEEP YOU *ENTERTAINED!*

DID YOU KNOW I'M WRITING A SONG IN HONOR OF MY *MOTHER-IN-LAW?*

SAY, ANYBODY GOT A RHYME FOR *HATCHET-FACE?*

16

HEARD MY *OTHER* SONG?

"SHE WAS ONLY A PRINTER'S DAUGHTER, BUT SHE WASN'T MY *TYPE!*"

MISERABLE... YET I CAN'T STOP *LAUGHING!*

HA-H-HA-HA

THEN THERE'S THE *PRISONER'S SONG--*

"I *FRIED* FOR YOU!"

DON'T STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE--"SHE WAS ONLY AN *UMPIRE'S* DAUGHTER, BUT SHE WAS NEVER SAFE WHEN SHE WAS *OUT!*"

HA-HAHA

LIMBS *TREMBLING...* RIBS *ACHING...* WITH HIS BRUTAL, UNCONTROLLABLE *LAUGHTER!*

THE ROPE'S *SMOLDERING!* ONLY BARE *SECONDS* LEFT TO SAVE DR. ROCKWELL!

HOW ABOUT THIS ONE, *BATMAN?--*

"I JUST FLEW IN FROM *GOTHAM*, AND GEE, MY ARMS ARE *TIRED!*"

WOULD YOU BELIEVE MY HOTEL ROOM IS SO SMALL THE MICE ARE *HUNCHBACKED!*

MUST *CONCENTRATE...BLOCK* HIS *VOICE*--AND THOSE HIDEOUSLY UNFUNNY JOKES!

17

UNFUNNY-- YES! THAT'S THE *WAY* TO *BEAT* HIM!

...I CALL ROOM SERVICE FOR A PITCHER OF *FRESH AIR!*

I PUT THE FRONT DOOR KEY IN THE LOCK--

--AND IT BREAKS THE *REAR WINDOW!*

BATMAN... YOU'RE NOT *LAUGHING--?*

NOT ANY-*MORE,* CLOWN!

AT THAT INSTANT THE ROPE FIBERS PART--

--THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE *PLUNGES--*

--AND ABRUPTLY *HALTS* A SCANT *INCH* FROM THE FRIGHTENED DOCTOR!

SORRY I WASN'T FASTER! I HAD A BIT OF *FIGURING* TO DO!

I'LL HAUL YOU FROM THERE--

--AND UNTIE YOU AS SOON AS I'VE DEALT WITH THE *JOKER!*

FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE THEATRE! FELLA ASKED ME FOR TWENTY DOLLARS FOR A CUP OF *TEA*--

--I SAID TEA IS ONLY A *DIME* AND...

...UGGH...

...AND HE SAID ⊰MMF!⊱ I'M A *BIG* TIPPER!

SAVE 'EM, JOKER! AS *QUEEN VICTORIA* REMARKED--

"--WE ARE *NOT* AMUSED!"

DAWN IN LONDON...A GLORIOUSLY HOT SUN BURNS AWAY THE FOG AND WARMS THIS SUBURBAN HOSPITAL...

I'VE INJECTED YOU WITH THE ANTIDOTE TO THE JOKER'S SERUM, BATMAN!

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS IN A MINUTE!

WHILE WE WAIT... MAY I ASK HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO OVERCOME THE SERUM LAST NIGHT --AND SAVE MY LIFE?

SIMPLE, DOCTOR--

I REASONED THAT THE DRUG CAUSED ME TO LAUGH WHEN I WAS CONFRONTED BY HORROR... DEATH... VIOLENCE!

THEREFORE, I THEORIZED THAT SOMETHING GENUINELY FUNNY WOULD AFFECT ME THE OPPOSITE WAY!

SO I SIMPLY CONCENTRATED ON THE FUNNIEST SCENES FROM ALL THE MARX BROTHERS PICTURES!

BRILLIANT! AND NOW IT'S TIME TO TEST THE ANTIDOTE! PAY CLOSE ATTENTION--

A FORK SAYS TO A SPOON, "WHO WAS THAT LADLE I CAUGHT YOU WITH?"

THE SPOON REPLIES--

"THAT WAS NO LADLE, THAT WAS MY KNIFE!"

A TRULY HORRIBLE JEST-- AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN CRACK A SMILE!

CONGRATULATIONS, DOCTOR!

YOUR CURE IS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS!

THE END.

20

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

the BRAVE and the BOLD

APR.
NO. 118
30440

PRESENTS

BRAVE AND BOLD

BATMAN AND WILDCAT

CO-STARRING

THE JOKER

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

"MAY THE BEST MAN ~~WIN~~ DIE!"

SPARTA PRISON, A GRIM, GRAY ISLAND OF STONE AMIDST A GREEN SEA OF FOREST 200 MILES DUE NORTH OF GOTHAM CITY, WHERE RIGHT NOW...

ALL RIGHT, DUBCEK--YOU CAN **ROT** IN THERE...ROT UNTIL HADES FREEZES OVER!

SWEATING OUT TIME IN **SOLITARY** WILL CHANGE YOUR MIND--MAKE YOU SPILL YOUR GUTS ABOUT YOUR BOSS, **THE JOKER!**

NEVER, GORDON! MIKE DUBCEK AIN'T NO RAT!

THE JOKER! ONCE AGAIN THE GRINNING JACKAL OF CRIME RETURNS--BUT THIS TIME HIS CHILLING CHUCKLE TRIGGERS A PLOT SO CUNNING, SO EVIL, THAT **THE BATMAN** FINDS HIMSELF FACING HIS OWN BEST ALLY, **WILDCAT,** IN A FIGHT TO THE FINISH... WHEN ECHOES THE CRY...

STORY: BOB HANEY
ART: JIM APARO

MAY THE BEST MAN ~~WIN~~ DIE!

THINK IT'LL WORK, **BATMAN**-- KEEPING HIM IN SOLITARY SO HE'LL REVEAL ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT THE **JOKER'S** OPERATIONS, HENCHMEN, AND HIDEOUTS?

IT **HAS** TO, COMMISSIONER! SINCE THAT GHASTLY CLOWN ESCAPED AGAIN, HE'S ON A RAMPAGE OF MURDER AND MAYHEM EXTREME EVEN FOR **HIM!**

IT'S AS IF HE'S MAKING UP FOR LOST CRIME-TIME! DUBCEK IS THE KEY FOR CORRALLING **THE JOKER**... IF HE'LL ONLY TALK! KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED!

ONE WEEK LATER, IN GOTHAM CITY...

BATMAN! FROM SPARTA'S WARDEN! DUBCEK'S **CRACKING!**

HE WROTE TO **THE JOKER**-- AND THE LETTER WAS INTERCEPTED, COPIED, AND THEN SENT ON!

DUBCEK WARNS **THE JOKER** HE CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE SOLITARY!

GOOD! HE'S CRACKING ALL RIGHT! A LITTLE MORE TIME-- AND THE "RAT" WILL SING A SONG THAT'LL TRAP A "HYENA"!

BUT SOMEWHERE IN GOTHAM CITY, THIS VERY NIGHT...

I DON'T LIKE LETTING YOU HAVE THIS-- IT'S TOO **RISKY!**

BUT YOU'LL DO IT BECAUSE YOU LIKE MONEY...

... AND BECAUSE IF YOU **DON'T,** THE LAST THING YOU WILL EVER HEAR IS THE LAUGH ... OF **THE JOKER!**

GOOD EVENING, "DOC"! HA HA HA

2

WHAT DASTARDLY DEED IS THE **CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME** CONTEMPLATING? THE FOLLOWING DAY, HILLMAN'S GYM, WHERE THE "FIGHT CROWD" GATHERS...

IS IT TRUE, CHAMP, YOU'RE BOXING AN EXHIBITION BOUT AT SPARTA PRISON TOMORROW?

NOW WORKING OUT TED GRANT FORMER WEIGHT CHAMP

SURE! THOSE CONS UP THERE ARE HUMAN BEINGS--THEY NEED SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT, CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD!

YES, IT'S TED GRANT, ALIAS **WILDCAT**, CRIMEFIGHTER AND CYCLIST EXTRAORDINARY AND ALLY OF **THE BATMAN** IN A SMASHING SERIES OF **BRAVE & BOLD** SAGAS...

UH... CHAMP, I'M WHITEY ROSS ...USED TO FIGHT BANTAMWEIGHT! NEED A JOB! COULD YOU USE A SECOND AT SPARTA TOMORROW?

SURE, WHITEY! I CAN USE A GOOD MAN IN MY CORNER--AND WE EX-PUGS HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER!

AND THE NEXT DAY, INSIDE SPARTA'S GRIM WALLS...

TED GRANT'S DUE SOON! WE NEED AN OPPONENT FOR THE EXHIBITION MATCH!

SECURITY GUARD

ONLY ONE GUY FOR THAT, WARDEN--**MIKE DUBCEK!** HE ONCE ALMOST TOOK GRANT'S TITLE IN A DISPUTED DECISION!

EVERY CON IN THE PLACE SAYS DUBCEK IS THE BETTER FIGHTER! IF WE DON'T LET HIM FIGHT GRANT, WE MIGHT HAVE A RIOT ON OUR HANDS!

YES, I KNOW! I PROMISED **BATMAN** AND GORDON TO KEEP HIM IN SOLITARY... BUT A FEW HOURS OUT CAN'T HURT!

GET HIM READY!

THAT AFTERNOON, AS 600-ODD TOUGH CONVICTS EXCITEDLY GATHER IN THE PRISON'S HUGE EXERCISE YARD...

THIS TIME, CHEESE CHAMP, I'M GONNA **CLOBBER** YA--!

EASY, DUBCEK... NO DIRTY TACTICS!

BUT JUST AS THE BOUT IS READY TO BEGIN...

HEY, LITTLE MAN... THAT'S **DUBCEK'S** WATER BUCKET! HERE'S **YOURS!**

UH... SORRY, MUSTA GOT 'EM MIXED UP!

AND NOW AS THE TWO OLD FOES MEET BEFORE THIS VERY SPECIAL BUNCH OF FANS...

GET 'IM, MIKE!

POWDER THE MUG, DUBCEK!

CHOP 'IM DOWN, MIKE KIDDO!

3

ONE ROUND... TWO ROUNDS, AND WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN "EXHIBITION" TURNS INTO A BRUTAL "GRUDGE FIGHT"...

UFFF! HE'S TOUGH... AND FIGHTING *MEANER* THAN HE DID IN OUR TITLE BOUT!

THEN, IN ROUND 4...

YAAHOO! THE CHEESE CHAMP'S DOWN!

HE'S HAD IT!

YEAAAH!

...5...6... 7...

TAKE THE FULL 8 COUNT, CHAMP... THEN GET UP AND HOOK THE BUM! HE'S A SUCKER FOR A HOOK OVER HIS RIGHT LEAD!

UH... THANKS, WHITEY!

NOW, THE FORMER HEAVYWEIGHT KING IS UP--AS HIS OPPONENT BORES IN FOR THE KILL...

PTOW

DID YA SEE *THAT*?

WOW! LIKE BEING HIT BY A .38 SLUG!

AND AS THE TOUGH CON IS COUNTED OUT...

NICE BOUT, DUBCEK!

HUH? YOU GOT LUCKY... "CHUMP!"

TWO DAYS LATER...

EVERY INMATE IN SPARTA'S INFECTED, *BATMAN*... SOME KIND OF *MYSTERY DISEASE!* THE WHOLE PRISON'S AN ISOLATION WARD!

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

4

SHORTLY...

IT'S *UNCANNY*-- THEY'VE ALL GOT A *RARE* TROPICAL FEVER... A DISEASE NEVER SEEN BEFORE IN THIS COUNTRY!

THEN IT HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN FROM *OUT-SIDE*, DOCTOR!

IT STARTED WITH MIKE DUBCEK... THEN HIT THE OTHER CELL BLOCKS!

IF WE DON'T FIND A QUICK CURE, THE PRISONERS WILL START *DYING* IN ANOTHER 72 HOURS!

WHAT? HOW COULD DUBCEK GET IT? HE'S IN *SOLITARY!*

I ADMIT I LET HIM OUT TO BOX GRANT-- THEN LET HIM EAT IN THE PRISON MESS HALL AS A REWARD FOR A GOOD FIGHT!

BLAST! IT'S ALL BECOMING CLEAR!

THE JOKER! I'LL BET *HE* SOME-HOW IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EPIDEMIC IN A DIABOLICAL PLOT TO GET DUBCEK!

SHORTLY...

YOU'RE SO *RIGHT!* DUBCEK'S WATER BUCKET WAS USED TO INFECT HIM DURING THE FIGHT!

LATER, THE OTHER INMATES CAUGHT IT WHEN HE ATE WITH THEM!

INCREDIBLE! THE JOKER TRIES TO KILL THE *ONE* MAN HE FEARS MIGHT RAT ON HIM-- AND NOW 600 OTHERS MIGHT DIE!

THEY'RE CONVICTS... BUT WE *MUST* SAVE THEM... SOMEHOW!

NEXT DAY, BACK IN GOTHAM CITY...

I NEVER DREAMED "WHITEY ROSS" WAS *THE JOKER'S* STOOGE... THE WATER BUCKET SWITCH SEEMED A NORMAL MIX-UP!

BRRING

FORGET IT, TED-- BUT MAYBE AS *WILDCAT* YOU CAN HELP US RUN THAT LAUGHING HYENA TO EARTH FOR GOOD!

5

WE'RE IN **LUCK!** A SCIENTIST AT BARSTON INSTITUTE'S BEEN RESEARCHING THAT RARE DISEASE!

HE'S GOT **ONE** LAB ANIMAL WHOSE BLOOD'S CRAMMED WITH ENOUGH ANTIBODIES TO INJECT ALL THE PRISONERS!

THEY'RE AS GOOD AS **SAVED!**

NEXT MORNING...

SPOT IS WORTH HIS WEIGHT IN **GOLD**-- THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME TO PREPARE ANOTHER ANIMAL!

WE DIG, DOCTOR! HE'LL REACH THE AIRPORT AND THE PLANE FOR SPARTA SAFELY!

AND AS THE ARMORED CAR AND ITS UNIQUE LIVING CARGO ROLLS AWAY, TWO FAMED FIGURES ARE RIDING ESCORT-- ONE BELOW...

AIRPORT 7 MILES

...AND ONE ABOVE...

BUT WHAT **BATMAN**-- AND **WILDCAT**, CAUGHT FARTHER BACK IN THE JAM--CANNOT SEE IS THE EXHAUST OF THE CAR NEAREST THE STALLED STEEL VAULT...

HA! HA! HA!

TRAFFIC JAM! BUT IT'S OKAY-- THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME TO MAKE THAT PLANE!

LAUGHTER INSIDE THE WHEELED FORTRESS--LAUGHTER THAT IS ECHOED BY HARSHER TONES IN THAT NEARBY VEHICLE...

THE JAM'S BREAKING UP, **JOKER!**

THEY ALWAYS DO, SOONER... OR **LATER!** HA! HA! HA! HAH!

6

IN THE ROAR AND CONFUSION OF THE MORNING RUSH HOUR, AN EVEN *MORE* CONFUSING EVENT...

WHAT'S GOTTEN *INTO* THEM? THEY'RE WEAVING ALL OVER THE PLACE!

BATMAN TO WILDCAT! THE ARMORED CAR'S TURNING OFF THE AIRPORT ROUTE! SOMETHING'S WRONG!

WILDCAT TO BATMAN! I'LL CATCH UP AND FIND OUT!

BUT BEFORE THE *CAT-O-CYCLE* CAN WEAVE THROUGH THE SLOW-MOVING MASS OF VEHICLES...

CRANNG

HA! HA! HA--!

HA HA HA

ARRFF!

COME, SPOT! HAVE A BISCUIT! HA! HA!

A MOMENT LATER...

HA! HA! HA! NOTHING LIKE A PERSONAL WIRETAP ON COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OWN PHONE TO KNOW WHAT ONE'S ENEMIES ARE UP TO!

AND A LITTLE LAUGHING GAS TO CRACK A "DOGGY BANK"! HA! HA!

BUT NOR FAR BEHIND...

SOME BOZO *STOLE* THE DOG, *BATMAN!* BUT I GOT HIS CAR IN SIGHT!

THE JOKER! STAY WITH HIM, WILDCAT!

AHEAD, AS THE PURSUED CAR SLOWS FOR A TURN...

WHAT--? COME BACK, YOU LITTLE DEVIL!

7

HE'S CHASING THAT OTHER MUTT! AFTER THEM!

CAN'T SQUEEZE IN THERE!!

SKREEEEE

FORGET THE JOKER...GRAB THE DOG!

?

CAN DO, BATMAN!

BUT AS THE CHASE ROARS OUT TOWARD THE WINDING GOTHAM RIVER...

A DRAWBRIDGE! AND IT'S OPENING!!

THE NEXT MOMENT...

YEEOW! GOT TO MAKE THIS... OR HIT THE DRINK!

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

8

AND AS WILDCAT LEAPS HIS CAT-O-CYCLE TO THE BRIDGE'S OTHER SIDE...

SO YOU BROUGHT HOME A FRIEND, EH, QUEENIE? WELL, ONLY ROOM FOR ONE DOG...

...ON THIS TUB! SO LONG, POOCH!

YAARRF!!

MOMENTS LATER, ROARING ALONG THE RIVER BANK...

I LOST THE DOG, BATMAN!

WHAT LOUSY LUCK! WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM BEFORE THE JOKER DOES!

NOW AN AMAZING "DOGHUNT" BEGINS IN GOTHAM CITY--AT STAKE THE LIVES OF 600 IMPRISONED MEN 200 MILES AWAY!

POLICE

WHILE, ALONG THE DESERTED RIVERFRONT...

COME ON, BOY--!

RAAAFF!

IN THE NEXT FEW HOURS, WHILE A GREAT CITY IS COMBED FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER, AN OLD STORY IS PLAYED ONCE MORE --A BOY AND HIS DOG...

AND THEN...

DOWN THERE... IT'S SPOT!

STOP..!!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

ARRF RAAFF

GOTHAM DAILY NEWS... COMB CITY FOR DOG PRISONERS' LIVES AT STAKE

HUH?

POOR LITTLE GUY'S SCARED! IT'S ALL RIGHT, FELLA! OLD EDDIE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

10

SAY, YOU'RE BRIGHT! MAYBE YOU KNOW SOME OTHER TRICKS!

ROLL OVER--!

GREAT! YOU GOT THE GIFT, POOCH! THE GIFT TO BE A TOP TRICK DOG!

I SHOULD KNOW-- I WAS ONCE THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS... ME AND MY DOG ACT!

PERFECT! PAL, YOU'RE MY LIFESAVER! WITH YOU, I CAN BUILD A NEW ACT-- GET BACK IN THE CIRCUS --BE BIG TIME!

SNAP

SUDDENLY, A LITHE, CAPED FIGURE LOOMS IN THE ALLEY...

HEY, OLD-TIMER! YOU SEE A LITTLE DOG... WITH A BIG SPOT ON ONE EYE? THAT'S HIS NAME --SPOT!

WHAT... BATMAN? A DOG--? NAW... I WAS SLEEPING ONE OFF... JUST WOKE UP!

DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BATMAN WANTS WITH YOU, PAL-- BUT NOTHIN'S GONNA SEPARATE ME FROM MY TICKET BACK TO THE BIG-TIME!

LOTS OF TRUCKS GO BY ON THAT STREET AHEAD, SPOT! WE'LL JUMP ON A SLOW ONE AND HITCH A RIDE!

ARRF! ARRF!

Boltin off...

Y NEWS

DOG

ONERS'

STA

NO, SPOT! NOT THAT TRUCK!

CRRNNG

WELL, WELL, NOW WE GOT 'EM JUMPING *IN* INSTEAD OF *OUT!*

SPOT! SPOT!

RAAFF RAFFF

GOTHAM CITY DOG POUND

IT IS A FEW HOURS LATER, AND ALL OVER A GREAT CITY, MILLIONS LISTEN TO A DESPERATE APPEAL...

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS DOG? CALL THIS POLICE EMERGENCY NUMBER IMMEDIATELY!

SALE

SALE 10% OFF

WHILE AT HEADQUARTERS...

IT'S LIKE LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK!

THOUSANDS OF STRAY DOGS ARE IN GOTHAM--!

AND TIME'S *RUNNING OUT!* IF WE DON'T FIND SPOT SOON, IT'LL BE *TOO LATE* TO GET HIM TO SPARTA AND INOCULATE THE PRISONERS!

THEY'LL DIE-- ALONG WITH THEM, MIKE DUBCEK --PERHAPS OUR *ONLY* CHANCE TO TRAP THAT UNHOLY FIEND, *THE JOKER!*

WELL, WE'RE NOT DOING ANY GOOD IN HERE! I'M TAKING THE OLD *CAT-O-CYCLE* AND PLAYING DOGCATCHER AGAIN!

BATMAN? WHAT--??

DOGCATCHER! WHY DIDN'T WE THINK OF IT *BEFORE?*

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

AND VERY SHORTLY, AT THE GOTHAM CITY DOG POUND...

THAT MUTT? SURE, BATMAN, WE HAD HIM HERE -- BUT HIS MASTER CAME AND CLAIMED HIM... JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO!

WEIRD-LOOKIN' BOZO... HAD GREEN HAIR--

--THE JOKER! LET'S GO, WILDCAT!

BUT AS THE BRAVE AND BOLD ALLIES SCOUR THE STREETS...

WE COVERED THE AREA THREE TIMES -- NOT A SIGN OF HIM!

HE BEAT US AGAIN! FOR ALL WE KNOW, HE MAY HAVE KILLED THAT POOR LITTLE DOG BY NOW--!

THEN!

JOKER TO BATMAN! YES, I KNOW YOUR SECRET POLICE FREQUENCY!

IF YOU WANT A FIGHTING CHANCE TO GET BACK MAN'S BEST FRIEND...

...GO TO JEFFERSON SQUARE GARDEN! BUT, I'LL BE LISTENING ON THE POLICE WAVE LENGTH... SO DON'T CALL THE FUZZ! HA! HA!

JOKER... WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

SHORTLY, IN THE MOST FAMOUS ARENA IN FISTDOM, HALLOWED HOME OF A THOUSAND CHAMPIONSHIP BOUTS WHERE NOW...

LADEEZ AND GENTLEMENNN! IN THIS CORNER... WEARING GRAY TIGHTS AND A BLUE CAPE...

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...WEIGHING 190 OR THEREABOUTS, THE MASKED MANHUNTER, PRIDE OF GOTHAM CITY...THE GREAT BATMAN!

AND IN THIS CORNER, WEARING DARK BLUE, WEIGHING AROUND 200... THE FORMER HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPEEN... TED GRANT ALIAS... WILDCAT!

IN A NEUTRAL CORNER, WEIGHING MAYBE 15 POUNDS, LITTLE SPOT WITH A GUN POINTED BETWEEN HIS POINTY EARS!

NOW, A FIGHT TO THE FINISH, AND IF I'M PLEASED...

...

...SPOT WILL BE FREED! IF I'M NOT ...HE DIES! HEH! HA! HO!

THIS IS LIKE A NIGHTMARE-- JOKER FORCING US TO FIGHT... USING THE DOG AS BLACKMAIL!

BUT WHAT CHOICE DID WE HAVE? WE MUST DO ANYTHING TO SAVE THE CONVICTS ...SOME OF THEM, ANYWAY...

...SINCE DUBCEK, THE FIRST INFECTED, WILL NEVER GET THE ANTIBODIES IN TIME NOW!

AS THE TWO COMBATANTS ARE CALLED TO RING CENTER...

AND HE'S MADE US WEAR THE CESTUS... THE DEADLY METAL GLOVES OF THE ANCIENT ROMAN BOXERS... SO HE'LL SEE MORE BLOOD!

NOW... MAY THE BEST MAN... WIN! HA! HO! HEE!

14

STOP FAKING! MIX IT UP! SLUG!

I WANT ACTION!

THAT'S BETTER! NOW, WILDCAT, GIVE 'EM THE OLD ONE-TWO!

FAIR! NOT GOOD ENOUGH! FIGHT HARDER...

KRAK

...OR THE POOCH BITES THE CANVAS RIGHT NOW! HA! HA! HA! HA!

AND AS THE AWESOME MAN WHO SMILES WITHOUT MIRTH TAUNTS THEM, **BATMAN** AND **WILDCAT** INCREASE THE TEMPO OF THEIR BIZARRE BOUT...

POW

KRAK

GOOD! GREAT! BEAUTIFUL! HA! HA! HEH! HO!

THAT'S IT! SOFTEN EACH OTHER UP! HA! HA! HEE!

INCREDIBLE! BATMAN'S DOWN!

15

NO, HE'S UP... HE STAGGERS INTO A CLINCH!

YOU ALMOST... TORE MY HEAD OFF! THESE CESTI--THEY REALLY **DID** KILL THE OLD ROMAN BOXERS!

SORRY, BUT IF WE HOLD BACK... THAT CHORTLING CREEP WILL KILL THE DOG!

AND AS THE INCREDIBLE BATTLE CONTINUES...

BEAUTIFUL! QUICK, BATMAN, FINISH HIM OFF! HA! HA!

THUD

BLEEDING, BATTERED, THE TWO COMRADES POUND EACH OTHER MERCILESSLY, IN A CONTEST WHERE THERE IS NO REST!

WHAT? YOU'RE **TIRED?** FIGHT **HARDER**-- OR THE DOG **DIES!**

SUMMONING SOME LAST RESERVE OF STRENGTH, THE TWO SUPERB ATHLETES DELIVER DESPERATE PUNCHES, AND...

PTOW

NOW--!

DOUBLE KAYO!

BUT YOU NEVER GUESSED, SAPS, THE CESTI YOU WORE WERE **TAINTED WITH THE RARE FEVER GERMS...** AND BY CUTTING EACH OTHER SO FIERCELY, YOU **BOTH** BECAME **INFECTED!**

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

NOW YOU BOTH WILL DIE... SINCE THE ONLY THING THAT WILL SAVE YOU, LITTLE SPOT, WILL NOW BE KILLED, ANYWAY!
THE MORAL, HEROES, IS NEVER TRUST A...JOKER! HA! HA! HEE!
ARRRGGGHH
YYYIIII!
HE BIT ME, THE LITTLE MONSTER!
TAKE HIM OUT! DESTROY HIM--NOW!!
MOMENTS LATER...
NOW, DUBCEK WILL NEVER RAT ON ME... AND YOU TWO GREAT CRIME-FIGHTERS WILL BE OUT OF MY HAIR... FOREVER!
YEAH... BUT YOU'LL DIE, TOO, YOU INHUMAN CLOWN! THE DOG'S SALIVA--IT'S FILLED WITH FEVER GERMS--NOT ANTI-BODIES!
WHAT? Y-YOU'RE LYING!
???
AM I? YOU CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE, EITHER WAY!
NO! I CAN'T DIE! MUST GET THAT DOG!!
AND A COUPLE BLOCKS FROM THE ARENA...
NO! DON'T--!!
HUH?
I MUST SAVE HIM!
17

OH, NOO--! I FORGOT... I CAN'T SWIM!

HELP! HELPPP!

NICE PUNCH, CHAMP! I'LL GET SPOT AND THAT HUNK OF INHUMAN FLOTSAM HE'S TRYING TO SAVE!

AND A FEW MINUTES LATER...

IS IT TRUE JOKER'S ALSO INFECTED BY SPOT'S BITE?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT WAS A DESPERATE IDEA THAT WORKED!

IT GOT HIM OFF OUR BACKS LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO RECOVER AND TURN THE TABLES ON HIM!

IN ANY CASE, HE'LL GET AN INJECTION OF SPOT'S ANTI-BODIES ALONG WITH ALL THE PRISONERS AT SPARTA... JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

POLICE

RAFFFF

SOME TIME LATER...

SPOT'S A HERO, DOCTOR! ALL THE CONVICTS ARE CURED, INCLUDING MIKE DUBCEK--

--HE AND THE JOKER CAN BOTH BROOD ABOUT THEIR CLOSE CALLS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT... IN SEPARATE CELLS!

ARRFF

ARFFF

BUT THE AWESOME, GHASTLY JOKER HAS BEEN SALTED AWAY BEFORE ...ONLY TO RETURN TO PLAGUE MANKIND! WATCH FOR HIM--AND THE BATMAN AND TEAM-UP HEROES, IN FUTURE ISSUES OF BRAVE & BOLD!

18

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

1ST SENSATIONAL ISSUE OF THE *CLOWN PRINCE of CRIME* IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE!

25¢ NO. 1 MAY 32443

THE JOKER

THE JOKER

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

HA HA HA! EAT YOUR HEARTS OUT, YOU TWO-BIT BADDIES!

THIS MAGAZINE BELONGS TO **BATMAN'S NUMBER ONE FOE...**

ME!

NOW AT LAST... IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE...

THE JOKER

AREN'T YOU GOING TO LET *ME* OUT, *TOO?*

ALAS... *NO!* I HAVE NEED OF A TRULY *MASTER* CRIMINAL--AND *TWO-FACE* QUALIFIES *MORE* THAN *YOU, SEÑOR JOKER!*

YOU'VE JUST ENTERED THE *ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE*-- IN THE MIDST OF AN *ESCAPE!* THEREFORE... YOU'RE IN ON THE BEGINNING OF ONE OF THE *STRANGEST* EPISODES IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME! *LOOK... LISTEN...*

STOP *JABBERING, ALVAREZ--* AND LET'S *GO!*

WEIRD, HUH? WELL, IT GETS A LOT *WEIRDER* IN THIS TALE OF...

"The JOKER'S DOUBLE JEOPARDY!"

STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL

ART BY: IRV NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO

EDITING BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

MOMENTS LATER...

TWO-FACE HAS *ESCAPED--AGAIN!*

--WHILE WE WERE *GASSED!* SOMEONE SLIPPED IT INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM--

--THEN SPIRITED *HARVEY DENT--* ALIAS *TWO-FACE--*OUT!

PRATTLING POPPINJAYS--MOUTHING MEANINGLESS MUTTERINGS AS I *SUFFER* AN *INTOLERABLE INSULT!*

HE SAID *TWO-FACE--*THE DOUBLE-DEALING DOLT--IS A GREATER CRIMINAL THAN *I* AM! *ABSURD!*

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU CRY... EH, *JOKER?*

"THAT WOULD BE *GROTESQUE--* TEARS TRICKLING DOWN..."

HUH--?!

I WAS QUOTING ROSTAND'S *CYRANO DE BERGERAC,* ILLITERATE IMBECILE!

FORTUNATELY, I'LL SOON BE *FREE* OF SUCH TRASH AS THEM!

I'VE ALREADY ARRANGED MY *OWN* LITTLE BYE-BYE BID!

AND, DURING THE NEXT MORNING'S *EXERCISE PERIOD...*

LOOK AT THE *CLOWN* PLAYING WITH THOSE *TOY BALLOONS* THAT CHARITY OUTFIT DONATED!

YEAH... JUST LIKE A *LITTLE KID!*

TA-TA... AND HA, HA!

HE'S GETTIN' AWAY!

THAT HAND-PUMP MUSTA BEEN FILLED WITH HELIUM!

HE'S AN EASY TARGET! WATCH ME GUN HIM DOWN!

POP!

HEY! THIS AIN'T MY GUN!

IT'S BEEN SWITCHED!

I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DOES IT! THAT JOKER'S TRICKIER THAN A WHOLE CIRCUS!

SOMETIME LATER, ON A STREET IN SUBURBAN GOTHAM...

MUST BE AN ADVERTISING STUNT! --REAL DUMB!

NO DUMBER THAN THAT SQUEEZING-THE-TISSUE COMMERCIAL!

NEWSPAPERS

I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON THE OBTUSENESS OF THE AVERAGE CITIZEN!

PURVEY TO ME A NEWSPAPER, LAD!

WOW! THIS CHARACTER LOOKS LIKE THE JOKER-- ONLY FUNNIER!

AH, GOOD! THE MASKED MANHUNTER WON'T BE AROUND TO AGGRAVATE ME!

THE HERALD'S METRO SEC

BATMAN AT PARIS INTERPOL CON

SHORTLY, IN THE HIDEOUT OF THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME*...

GREETINGS... FAITHFUL *FOLLOWERS!*

I *COMMEND* YOU FOR HELPING ME *FLEE* MY *CONFINEMENT!*

GLAD TA, BOSS...'CAUSE YER THE *GREATEST!*

HOW *APPEALING* TO BE *APPRECIATED!*

BUT NOW, DOWN TO *BUSINESS*--

--SPECIFICALLY, THE BUSINESS OF *PROVING* I'M A *MUCH* FINER FELON THAN THAT SECOND-RATER, *TWO-FACE!*

WE GOT A *TIP* HE'S DOUBLED UP WITH A *SPANISH* DUDE NAME OF *SEÑOR ALVAREZ!*

AIN'T NO *WAY* OF GETTIN' TO 'EM, THOUGH!

THEY RENTED THE WHOLE TOP TWO FLOORS OF A *HOTEL* AN' THEY GOT *GUNS* POSTED AT ALL THE DOORS!

THAT SUITS ME *FINE*...

...I *LOVE* A *CHALLENGE!* HA, HA, *HA*, HA, *HA!*

SO, AT A SLIGHTLY SEEDY MIDTOWN HOSTELRY...

I SUGGEST YOU COME TO THE *POINT, SEÑOR ALVAREZ!*

EXACTLY *WHY* DID YOU SPRING ME?

TO COMMIT A *ROBBERY!*

RECENTLY, A GREAT *TREASURE* WAS TRANSFERRED FROM *MY* COUNTRY TO *YOURS!*

I WISH YOU TO *RECOVER* IT!

I CONSIDER THIS A MATTER OF *NATIONAL HONOR!*

NO *DICE!* I'M NO COMMON *HEIST* ARTIST!

AH, BUT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD WHAT THE TREASURE *IS*...TEN RARE GOLD *COINS*--*DOUBLOONS!*

--DOUBLOONS WITH *DOUBLE FACES!*

NOW YOU *INTEREST* ME! I HAVE A DOUBLE-HEADED COIN OF MY OWN...ONE SIDE *UNBLEMISHED*...THE OTHER *SCARRED*--LIKE *ME!*

I'LL LET *IT* DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSITION!

THE *EVIL* SIDE WINS!

ALVAREZ, YOU HAVE A *DEAL!*

THEN--

SOMEONE AT THE *DOOR!*

SI! THE *MEAL* I ORDERED FROM *ROOM SERVICE!*

NOK-NOK

MY *BODYGUARD* WILL TAKE CARE OF IT!

OKAY-- WHEEL IT IN!

THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR!

I'M SURE THIS FOOD WILL BE A GREAT *SURPRISE--*

SURPRISE, SURPRISE! BETCHA WEREN'T EXPECTING *PIE A LA JOKER!*

AIEEE! IT BURNS... LIKE *ACID!*

THAT'S BECAUSE IT *IS* ACID!

I'LL GIVE YOUR *CHUM* SOME, TOO! HA, HA, HA, HO, HO, HO!

I'LL HANDLE *TWO-FACE!*

THUD

DON'T *BANK* ON IT!

I SEEM TO HAVE PLAYED THIS SCENE *BEFORE, JOKER!*

ME, *TOO*... WITH *THE BATMAN!*

BUT *NOW* IT'S *YOU* AND *I* -- AND *I* HAVE A *PISTOL* -- A DOUBLE-BARRELED ONE!

THIS IS A GIMMICK *YOU* SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF! HA, HA!

I DON'T *NEED* 'EM!

KLUNK!

WITHIN MOMENTS...

HE'S *ESCAPED, JOKER*... THROUGH THEM *DOUBLE DOORS!*

FUNNY... I NEVER FIGURED HE'D DO ANYTHING AS ORDINARY AS KLUNK YOU WITH A PLAIN *BOWL!*

NOT A *PLAIN* BOWL, WITLING...

...A BOWL OF *PEARS*--

--AS IN *PAIRS*--

--AS IN *TWOS!*

WE BETTER SCRAM!

I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST THAT DOUBLE-DEALER TO SIC THE COPS ON US!

TRUE... IF HIS COIN LANDED GOOD SIDE UP!

BUT WE OVERHEARD HIM DECIDE TO PURLOIN THOSE DOUBLOONS!

NOW NOTHING WILL STOP HIM--

--EXCEPT ME, THAT IS!

WE SHALL SEE WHO IS THE MASTER OF ALL MASTER CRIMINALS!

BACK TO THE HIDEAWAY!

A FEW PREPARATIONS AND I'LL BE READY TO PUT EGG ALL OVER BOTH SIDES OF HIS FACE! HA, HA, HA!

LATER THE SAME EVENING...

FOR ME, BREAKING INTO THIS MUSEUM, WHERE THE DOUBLOONS ARE DISPLAYED, IS CHILD'S PLAY--

--AS IS ANTICIPATING TWO-FACE'S PLAN!

TOMORROW'S THE SECOND DAY OF THE MONTH!

THEREFORE... HE'LL MAKE HIS MOVE MAÑANA!

I NEED MERELY WAIT AND WHEN HE SHOWS... KA-POWY! HA, HA, HA!

THIS *BASEMENT* WILL SERVE AS A SATISFACTORY PLACE TO LURK...

EH--? THOUGHT I *HEARD* SOMETHING...

YOU HEARD *ME!*

I'M COVERING YOUR LOUTISH *HEAD--*

--SO I WON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT YOUR EXPRESSION OF *PAIN* AS I GIVE YOU THE OLD *ONE*...

...*TWO!*

SOMETIME LATER...

AWAKE, EH? DID YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU COULD OUTSMART *ME?*

I *WOULD* HAVE IF YOU HADN'T GOTTEN HERE *FIRST!*

YOU *VIOLATED* YOUR *M.O.!*

NONSENSE!

I PLANNED THIS CAPER FOR *2A.M.*--

AND SO IT IS!

IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW WE'RE IN A *SUB-BASEMENT*--A *SECOND* BASEMENT--WHERE THEY STORE TOOLS AND SUCH!

AND NO DOUBT YOU'VE NOTICED YOU'RE LASHED TO AN OLD-FASHIONED *BUZZ-SAW!*

UGGH... NOT THAT *COIN* AGAIN?

BUT OF COURSE! THE COIN WILL DECIDE YOUR *FATE!*

LIBERTY 1922

YOUR LUCK HAS DESERTED YOU, *JOKER*--

YOU *LOSE!* ISN'T THAT A *LAUGH?*

YOU'RE CHEATING!-- YOU *ALWAYS* USE A *PAIR* OF SOMETHING IN *YOUR* JOBS!

WHERE'S THE *DOUBLE* IN *THIS* SET-UP?

WHIRR!

DON'T YOU *SEE?* THE SAW WILL *BISECT* YOU... AND WHEN IT REACHES YOUR *CHIN--*

--YOU'LL BE LIKE *ME--* A *TWO-FACE!*

WHIRRRRRRR

BUT...BUT...THIS GAG WENT OUT WITH *SILENT FILMS!*

WHERE'S YOUR *ORIGINALITY?* WHERE'S YOUR *GOOD* SIDE?

THAT PART OF ME *WANTED* TO SPARE YOU! BUT ONCE THE COIN DECIDES, IT'S *FINAL!*

WHIRRRR-

NOW GO AHEAD AND *LAUGH, JOKER...* LAUGH TILL YOU *SPLIT!* HA, HA!

I GIVE WITH THE GAGS, MISTER *STRAIGHT MAN!*

STILL...HA, HA, HA! CAN'T HELP LAUGHING AT *THAT* JOKE...

EVEN THOUGH IT'S ON *ME!*

BUT THIS IS NO TIME FOR *LEVITY!* I HAVE TO CUT OUT... ER... *ESCAPE!*

MUCH AS I HATE TO *ADMIT* IT, *THE BATMAN HAS* TAUGHT ME A FEW TRICKS...

...SUCH AS-- *BE PREPARED!*

OR WAS THAT THE *BOY SCOUTS?* HA, HA! NEVER MIND... I *AM* PREPARED!

I FILLED MY *SQUIRTING FLOWER* WITH THE SAME ACID I USED ON *SENOR ALVAREZ!*

A BIT OF *PRESSURE* ON THE BULB IN MY POCKET AND... AH!

GLAD THE FLOWER AND BULB ARE MADE OF AN *ACID-PROOF PLASTIC!*

BUT THE ROPES AREN'T! THE ACID BETTER WORK A LITTLE *FASTER* OR ELSE!

AT LAST... AND IN *THIS* CASE, THE PARTING IS DEFINITELY *NOT* SWEET *SORROW!*

I REALLY *SHOULDN'T* USE THOSE OLD *SAWS* UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES--

--BUT WHAT GAGSTER CAN RESIST A GOOD... OR BAD... PUN?

AND THAT IS *TRULY* A BAD PUN... A *HIDEOUS* JEST--

--ALMOST AS HIDEOUS AS WHAT I'LL DO TO THAT DOUBLE-COUNTENANCED *MADMAN!*

MEANWHILE, IN THE MUSEUM'S MAIN HALL...

FRANKLY, COMMISSIONER GORDON, I'M *WORRIED!*

WE *REALIZE* THE DOUBLOONS' *GREAT WORTH* AND WE'VE TAKEN EVERY *PRECAUTION!*

YOU *NEEDN'T* BE, MR. KEMP!

SPANISH DOUBLOONS

MY *TOP MEN* ARE GUARDING THE *DISPLAY CASE!*

NEXT TO *THE BATMAN,* THEY'RE THE *BEST!*

IS THAT *ALL--?*

NO! IN *ADDITION*, THE CASE IS WIRED WITH AN *ALARM*--

--WHICH WILL AUTOMATICALLY CLOSE THE *EXITS*--

--AND BRING AN *ADDITIONAL* SQUAD OF MEN TO SURROUND THE *BUILDING*--

--UNTIL EVERYONE CAN BE *SEARCHED!*

BELIEVE ME, MR. KEMP... YOUR TREASURES ARE GUARANTEED *SAFE!*

SUDDENLY--

THE *LIGHTS!* THEY'VE GONE *OUT!*

ON THE *ALERT!*

NOBODY GOES *NEAR* THE DISPLAY-- *NOBODY!*

RIGHT, COMMISSIONER!

I- I'M *AFRAID*--

DON'T BE, MAN! THE DOORS ARE *SEALED!*

EVEN IF IT *IS* A ROBBERY ATTEMPT, IT'S BOUND TO *FAIL!*

A MINUTE TICKS BY... *TWO*-- AND...

SEE-- I *TOLD* YOU NOT TO WORRY, KEMP! THE LIGHTS ARE BACK ON AND THE COINS ARE *UNTOUCHED!*

WHEN THE *GOTHAM POLICE* PROMISE TO PROTECT SOMETHING, BY HEAVEN, IT GETS *PROTECTED!*

HOWEVER, THE COMMISSIONER WOULDN'T SOUND SO *CONFIDENT* IF HE COULD SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE *STOREROOM* ABOVE...

A *CINCH!* THE DUMMIES DON'T EVEN KNOW THE LOOT IS *GONE!*

THE EASIEST CAPER I'VE EVER *PULLED*--

"I SIMPLY SHORTED THE *ELECTRICAL* SYSTEM AND LOWERED A *POWERFUL MAGNET* THROUGH THIS *TRAPDOOR* ALVAREZ TOLD ME ABOUT--!"

"IN THE *DARK*, THEY DIDN'T SEE THE MAGNET PULL THE STEEL-RIMMED CASE UP TO WHERE I'M HIDING..."

"...THEN I SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED A *DUPLICATE* CASE! NOW *THEY* HAVE THE *PHONEY* DISPLAY, WHILE *I* HAVE THE *REAL ARTICLE!*"

I SIMPLY STAY PUT TILL IT QUIETS DOWN... THEN SLIP AWAY TO *FREEDOM!*

THE WAIT WILL PASS *SWIFTLY* WITH SUCH *BEAUTY* TO CONTEMPLATE!

AND, BEFORE LONG... THE LARGE BUILDING IS *QUIET* AND EMPTY AS A *TOMB*...

...AND THE TORTURED FIGURE PREPARES TO *VANISH!* AS HE QUIETLY LIFTS A WINDOW, A VOICE LIKE *BROKEN GLASS* DEMANDS--

DON'T LEAVE YET!

I'M PLANNING A *FUN* EVENING... WITH *YOU!*

YOU... *SURVIVED?!*

AND HOW'D YOU KNOW WHERE I--?

I OUTGUESSED YOU, BUDDY BOY! I *DEDUCED* YOU'D COMMIT YOUR ROBBERY FROM THE *SECOND FLOOR!*

AND THIS TIME, I WAS *RIGHT!*

IT WON'T DO YOU ANY *GOOD!*

WHAM!

HEH-HEH...YOU *BOWLED* ME OVER *ONCE*... AT THE *HOTEL!*

SURELY, YOU CAN'T EXPECT THE PERNICIOUS PLOY TO SUCCEED *TWICE!*

NO... I'M *WRONG!* *YOU* WOULD TRY A *SECOND* TIME!

I'LL *FIGHT*... BUT I WON'T LISTEN TO YOUR IDIOTIC *CRACKS!*

YOU'RE STILL *HOSTILE?*

THAT MAKES ME *MAD--*

--*MAD* ENOUGH TO TEAR OUT MY *HAIR--*

--AND *THROW* IT AT YOU!

FALSE HAIR!? MY *EYES--* *STINGING!*

MAYBE A FEW *SLAPS* WILL *CLEAR* THEM! MISTER *HELPFUL*... THAT'S *ME!*

BLAST YOU! I *WON'T* BE BEATEN BY A *CLOWN!*

SLAP!

SLAP

THE *BATMAN* IS MY *EQUAL!* BUT *YOU*... YOU'RE A *BUFFOON* AND I'LL *BREAK* YOU!

I PERCEIVE YOU'VE GRABBED MY *LAPELS!*

'TIS THE LAST OF *MANY* MISTAKES YOU'VE MADE!

UHHH! I CAN'T PULL... *LOOSE!*

NASTY ME...I SMEARED MY COAT WITH A POWERFUL *STICKUM--*

--AND YOU'RE *STUCK* LIKE A FLY ON *FLYPAPER!* *HA-HA-HA!*

YOU CAN'T OBJECT TO BEING *SWATTED!*

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO *ME! I'M* THE *TOP* CRIMINAL... *SECOND* TO *NONE!*

DRIVEN BY *DESPERATION, TWO-FACE* LUNGES *BACKWARD,* TAKING HIS JEERING OPPONENT *WITH* HIM--

THE *TOP?* NONSENSE... *TWO-FACE* CAN'T BE BETTER THAN *SECOND...*

...UHH... OOF!

...THERE IS A *CRASH* OF SKULLS HITTING THE FLOOR AND...

BONK!

KLUNG!

...STILLNESS!

NEXT DAY AS GUARDS ROUTINELY CHECK THE AREA...
WELL, WELL! A COUPLE OF ARKHAM ALUMNI--
--READY FOR A RIDE BACK TO THE LAUGHING ACADEMY!
ON YOUR FEET, KIDDOS!
YOU'RE HEADING HOME--
--TO YOUR NICE, COZY PADDED CELLS!
YOU'RE LEAVING THOSE LOVELY COINS LYING THERE?
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD? THOSE THINGS AREN'T WORTH A PACK OF GUM-WRAPPERS!
THEY'RE COUNTERFEIT--
--THE BATMAN DISCOVERED A SEÑOR ALVAREZ SWIPED THE GENUINE DOUBLOONS BEFORE THEY LEFT HIS COUNTRY!
HE WANTED YOU TO STEAL THE COUNTERFEITS--TO COVER HIS TRACKS!
ANYWAY, ALVAREZ IS IN JAIL! THEY FOUND HIM IN A HOSPITAL, RECOVERING FROM ACID BURNS!
18
HA-HA-HA-HA... WHY AREN'T YOU LAUGHING, TWO-FACE? DON'T YOU REALIZE--
--YOU--THE SUPREME DOUBLE-DEALER--HAVE BEEN DOUBLE-CROSSED!
HA-HA-HA-
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA HA!
HA HA!
HA
End

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

JOKER

THE JOKER

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

25¢

NO. 2

JULY

32443

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

TAKE A CARD-- ANY CARD!

ONLY THE JOKER STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND THE LAW!

"The SAD SAGA of WILLIE the WEEPER!"

AMERICA'S FOREMOST *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME*--

THE JOKER

--ACCEPTS THE ***STRANGEST*** CHALLENGE OF HIS CRIMINAL ***CAREER***--TO HELP A FELLOW ***FELON*** OVERCOME A ***HORRENDOUS*** HANDICAP!

BUT YOU KNOW ***HIM***... HE DOESN'T DO ***ZIP*** FOR ***ANYONE*** WITHOUT EXPECTING TO TURN A PRETTY ***PROFIT!***

ROBBERY...MAYHEM...AND ***THE JOKER'S*** MOST ***DEVIOUS*** DOUBLECROSS...THEY'RE ALL PART OF--

"The SAD SAGA of WILLY the WEEPER!"

STORY: DENNY O'NEIL
ART: IRV NOVICK & GARCIA LOPEZ
EDITING: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
...THE SAME WONDERFUL FOLKS WHO BRING YOU ***THE BATMAN!***

MIDDAY AT THE *ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE*... A MOST *UNPEACEFUL* MIDDAY...

DOLTS! IDIOTS--

ARKHAM ASYLUM

--HOW COULD YOU BE FOOLED BY *THAT?*

AT NIGHT, IT SURE LOOKED LIKE *THE JOKER... GREEN HAIR* AND ALL!

ONLY THE *"HAIR"* IS REALLY *GRASS!*

Gone on Vacation!

Back in 20 years! Ha. Ha! -The Joker!

THIS IS THE *FIFTH TIME* YOU'VE LET *THE JOKER* ESCAPE!

WELL, THERE WON'T BE A *SIXTH!*

YOU MEAN... WE'RE *FIRED--?*

YES! AND YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T HAVE YOU *PROSECUTED!*

THUS, THE HAPLESS PAIR SLINKS AWAY! BUT *REMEMBER* THEM... THEY'RE *BENNY KHISS* AND *MARVIN FARGO*... WE'LL BE MEETING THEM AGAIN SHORTLY...

NOW, THOUGH, LET'S LOOK IN ON *THE JOKER* IN HIS LAIR-- THE *HA-HACIENDA!*

I WANT TO *THANK* YOU FOR HELPING ME... AH-- TAKE *LEAVE* OF THAT CURSED *ARKHAM* PLACE!

MY SNIFF *PLEASURE, JOKER!*

WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR *NAME* IS, FRIEND?

WILLY THE *WEEPER!* SOB

SILLY, ISN'T IT?

I HAVE A *PROBLEM, JOKER,* AND I HOPE YOU CAN BAW *HELP!*

YOU SEE, I AM LIKE YOURSELF, A SNIFF *CRIMINAL GENIUS!*

I DEVISE BRILLIANT *PLANS* GULP BUT WHEN I GET THE *LOOT,* I BREAK DOWN AND, *BAW!*...

...*CRY*-- SO *HARD* I CAN'T FINISH THE JOB RIGHT!

THERE, THERE! I *SYMPATHIZE,* WILLY-- LIFE WITHOUT *ROBBING* AND *LOOTING* WOULD BE *EMPTY* INDEED!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT *I* CAN DO ABOUT IT, THOUGH!

ME *EITHER!* CHOKE

BUT I'M HOPING YOUR BOO-HOO *SPLENDID MIND* CAN DEVISE *SOMETHING!*

GOOD! I *ADORE* CHALLENGES!

I GOT AN IDEA--

--AN IDEA FOR COLLECTING THE *REWARD* ON YOU BUMS!

HAROLD... YOU'RE A *TRAITOR!*

SURE, WILLY! I ONLY AGREED TO DRIVE YOUR CAR SO YOU'D LEAD ME TO *THE JOKER!*

I MUST ADMIRE YOUR *ENTERPRISE,* HAROLD! YOU'VE GOT THE STUFF THAT'S MADE THIS COUNTRY *GREAT!*

I'D LIKE TO SHAKE YOUR *HAND!*

REALLY? OKAY, BUT NO *TRICKS, JOKER*-- OR I'LL *BLAST* YOU!

TRICKS? ME? HAROLD, YOU *HURT* ME...

...SO IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT *I* HURT *YOU!* HAHAHA!

MOST JOY-BUZZERS DELIVER ONLY A *MILD* SHOCK!

--BUT I'VE JUICED *MINE* UP TO *200 VOLTS!*

NITEY-*NIGHT,* HAROLD!

KRA

ASH

TOO BAD I HAVE TO DISPOSE OF HIM *PERMANENTLY,* BUT HE KNOWS THE LOCA-TION OF MY *HA-HACI-ENDA* HIDE-AWAY!

HELP ME DRAG HIM TO THE INCINERATOR CHUTE, WILLY!

TA-TA, HAROLD, LIKE ALL DOUBLE-CROSSERS, YOU'RE GOING *DOWN* TO A *HOT PLACE!*

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO YOUR *PROBLEM--!*

WE MUST PROBE THE *EXTENT* OF IT, WILLY LAD!

YOU'RE GOING TO COMMIT A *PETTY CRIME!*

WITHIN THE HOUR...

THAT'S IT-- CRACK THE LOCK ON THAT *GUM-BALL MACHINE!*

WE'LL SEE HOW YOU REACT!

GOOD, GOOD! CATCH THE LOOT IN YOUR HANDKERCHIEF AND WE'LL BE OFF!

I'M GETTING AWAY WITH IT! SNIFF BOO-HOO

YOU NITWIT!

YOU'RE LETTING THE STOLEN COPPERS DROP FROM YOUR HANDKERCHIEF!

SEE? IT *ALWAYS* CHOKE HAPPENS! I CRY AND THE CAPER IS *SPOILED!*

I'M A SORRY WRETCH!

MY, MY! YOU *DO* HAVE IT BAD!

YOU CAN'T EVEN COMMIT A *PENNY-ANTE THEFT* WITHOUT WEEPING!

BENNY--*LOOK!* IT'S *HIM*...

YEAH, MARVIN-- THE CREEP WHO LOST US OUR *JOBS--THE JOKER!*

C'MON-- LET'S GET HIM!

HOLD IT, JOKER! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

WHO--?

AHH--BENNY AND MARVIN--MY ERSTWHILE ASSOCIATES FROM *ARKHAM!* SO PLEASED TO SEE YOU!

WATCH IT! THIS CHARACTER IS *TRICKY!*

NOT AT ALL! HERE'S THE EVIDENCE YOU NEED--THE GUM-BALLS I STOLE!

HUH? *THE JOKER* SWIPING GUM-BALLS?

WELL, HE *IS* CRAZY--

--LIKE THE PROVERBIAL *FOX!*

THESE ARE REALLY *RUBBER BULBS*-- FILLED WITH *ONION JUICE!*

HEY!

YEOW!

:SOB: :SNIFF:

:BOO-HOO:

HA HA HA! LOOK AT 'EM CRY! *HAW HAW!*

VERY FUNNY, WILLY--

BUT WE'D BEST MAKE OUR GETAWAY...

...WHILE THEY'RE TEMPORARILY BLINDED!

SOON, BACK IN THE *HA-HACIENDA...*

IT'S AMAZING, WILLY! WHEN YOU SAW SOMEONE ELSE WEEPING, YOU *LAUGHED!*

AND JUST AS GOOD, YOU *ESCAPED* THE LAW!

HAHA! YEAH--

--ESCAPED, DIDN'T I...

I COMMITTED A CRIME AND GOT AWAY! OH :SOB:

OH, NO--NOT *AGAIN?!* JUST WHEN I THOUGHT YOU WERE *CURED!*

LET'S SIT HERE AND *TALK* THIS OVER!

WHAT'VE YOU GOT IN *MIND?* I SUPPOSE IT'S A JOB THAT'S WORTHY OF YOUR *TALENTS,* EH?

OF COURSE! HERE--I MADE A *DIAGRAM* TO ILLUSTRATE HOW WE CAN STEAL A FULL *TON* OF MILLIONAIRE *SANDOR CLEEVE'S PLATINUM!*

OBSERVE!

THE METAL IS IN A *STRONGROOM* ON THE *TOP FLOOR* OF CLEEVE'S MANSION!

THE ROOM IS GUARDED BY A SMALL *ARMY* AND LOADED WITH *ALARMS!*

STRONG ROOM

GUARDS

GUARDS

AIRSHAFT

HOSE

BASEMENT

LASER

BUT... THERE IS AN *AIRSHAFT* LEADING TO THE *BASEMENT!*

WE'LL *MELT* THE PLATINUM WITH A *LASER BEAM* SHOT THROUGH THE SHAFT...

...THE LIQUID METAL WILL DRAIN *DOWN* AND WE'LL PUMP IT INTO A *TRUCK* WAITING OUTSIDE!

AIRSHAFT

TRUCK

HOSE

BASEMEN

LASER

WONDERFUL, WILY WILLY!

THE POOR MILLIONAIRE... I'LL BE TAKING ALL HIS *PLATINUM--*

BAWWW!

DRY YOUR *EYES* AND GO MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE *CAPER!*

MEANWHILE I'LL WORK OUT A FOOLPROOF CURE FOR YOUR SILLY *BAWLING!*

YOU'RE A REAL *CHUM,* -SOB- *JOKER!*

HAPPY TO BE OF *SERVICE!*

--AND EVEN *HAPPIER* TO GET HOLD OF THAT *PLATINUM!*

EARLY THE NEXT DAY, *SANDOR CLEEVE'S* COMBINATION *MANSION* AND *FORTRESS...*

YOUR REFERENCES AREN'T VERY *GOOD--*

--BUT TWO OF MY GUARDS *QUIT* LAST NIGHT, SO I'LL *HIRE* YOU!

REPORT FOR DUTY AT *NOON SHARP!*

THANK YOU, MR. CLEEVE!

YOU'RE A *PRINCE,* MR. CLEEVE!

A SHORT TIME LATER--OUTSIDE OF *THE MANSION...*

AT LEAST NOW WE CAN PAY THE *RENT,* BENNY!

MARVIN! THAT GUY BY THE *FUEL TRUCK--*

--NOTICE HIS *STANCE...* LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN *GROUCHO MARX* AND A *STORK!*

HE'S *GOTTA* BE *THE JOKER!*

I DUNNO... RUNNING INTO HIM *TWICE* WOULD BE A MIGHTY BIG *COINCIDENCE!*

YOU KNOW ANYBODY ELSE WHO'S *THAT TALL* AND *THAT THIN*, AND WHO *WALKS THAT WAY?*

WE GOTTA *GET* THAT GUY!

QUICK, MARVIN-- DRAW YOUR *PIECE!*

BUT, BENNY... I DON'T *HAVE* ONE --REMEMBER? I PLANNED TO BUY A *NEW* ONE!

THEN RUN GET THE *COPS!*

I'LL *CORNER* THE RAT--

OKAY, BOZO--DON'T *MOVE!* GRAB *SKY!*

TWITCH AND I'LL LET *DAYLIGHT* THROUGH YOU!

BENNY, BUBBY! HOW *BANAL* TO SEE YOU!

YOU *NAILED* ME, BENNY--FAIR AND SQUARE!

I'LL COME *QUIETLY!*--SLAP THE *BRACELETS* ON ME!

OKAY, *JOKER--!* NO *TRICKS!*

ME? TRICKS?

CLICK!

STEP *LIVELY, JOKER!* THERE'S A *CELL* WAITING FOR YOU!

BENNY, BABY-- DON'T YOU WANT THE *REST* OF ME IN THAT CELL?

--OR WILL YOU SETTLE FOR JUST MY *ARMS?*

MAYBE YOU'D BETTER TIP-TOE BACK AND *DISCUSS* THE MATTER!

HAH--?

ON *SECOND* THOUGHT... DON'T *BOTHER* TIP-TOEING!

YOU CAN *SPRING* BACK INSTEAD-- WITH THE AID OF THE *SPRINGS* IN MY *SLEEVES!*

THIS SPONGE IS SOAKED WITH *CHLOROFORM--*

--ENOUGH TO PUT YOU IN DREAMLAND FOR AWHILE! *HA-HA-HA!*

UUUNNNFFFF

MEANWHILE, ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BUILDING...

YOU CAN *NEVER* FIND A COP WHEN YOU *NEED* ONE!

BE *ADVISED:* THERE'S MORE HERE THAN POOR MARVIN FARGO'S *DISTRESS!*

MIND EXPLAINING WHY YOU'RE *LOITERING,* MISTER?

OH...*OFFICER!* MY PAL HAS CORNERED *PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE... THE JOKER!*

FOLLOW *ME!*

MISTER, IF THIS IS A *GAG,* I'LL...

IT *AIN'T!*

SEE--

-I *TOLD* YOU!

I *APOLOGIZE!* IT *IS THE JOKER!*

YOUR PAL HAS HIM TRUSSED AS NEAT AS A *CHRISTMAS GOOSE!*

MMFFF

HEY... SPEAKING OF *BENNY,* WHERE *IS* HE?

PROBABLY OFF COLLECTING THE *REWARD!*

A FEW FEET AWAY, AROUND A CORNER...

OH, I *AM* SLY! HOW *CLEVER* OF ME-- TO PAINT *BENNY* TO RESEMBLE *ME!*

AT EXACTLY *12:01*, THE SITUATION AT THE *CLEEVE BUILDING* IS THUS--

PLATINUM BEING MELTED BY INTENSE *HEAT* FROM LASER BEAM AND FLOWING DOWN AIRSHAFT...

STRONG ROOM

GURGLE

MY BLASTED RELIEF IS *LATE!*

GUARD

WHERE *ARE* FARGO AND KHISS?

MR. CLEEVE

AIRSHAFT

YOO-HOO! *BEN-EEE!*

BASEMENT

LASER GUN

¡BAAWW!!¡

WILLY THE WEEPER

AND AT EXACTLY 12:02...

JACK, I'M ASKING YOU TO WORK A *SECOND SHIFT!*

THE GUYS I HIRED DIDN'T *SHOW!*

AW, GEEZ... I PROMISED MY GIRL I'D TAKE HER TO THE NEW *EASTWOOD* MOVIE!

MAY AS WELL CHECK THE *PLATINUM* WHILE I'M HERE!

NOT THAT *ANYTHING* COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO IT...

EMPTY?! *GONE!*

JACK--SOUND THE *ALARMS!*

AND ONE MORE THING, JACK--

--YOU'RE *FIRED!*

SWELL BY *ME!* NOW WE CAN MAKE THE *TWO O'CLOCK SHOW!*

AT THE SAME MINUTE, IN THE *BASEMENT*...

STUFF IS :SNIFF!: ALL PUMPED *OUT!*

TIME TO DISMANTLE THE :SNIFF: *LASER--!*

GOOD OLD LASER! DID A :SNIFF!: *GREAT* JOB!

I DID A GREAT JOB, TOO! ;SOB!

EVERYTHING WENT ;SNIFF!; PERFECTLY!

BASEMENT

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO DRIVE THE ;BOO-HOO; GETAWAY TRUCK TO THE MEETING-PLACE!

YEAH, EVERYTHING'S PERFECT--

--FOR ME! BUT NOT FOR POOR MISTER CLEEVE...;SOB! I SWIPED HIS PLATINUM!

HE'LL PROBABLY CRY HIS HEART OUT--!

;BAAAWW!;

;BAWW;- I'M CRYING SO HARD I CAN'T SEE TO DRIVE!

HAVE TO PULL OVER!

473N.Y.

;SOB; NOW THE COPS WILL PROBABLY CATCH UP WITH ME! ;BOO-HOO!;

;WAWWW;

HUSH, WILLY! YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR GETAWAY!

I PROMISED TO CURE YOU AND SO I WILL!

DRIVE TO THE SPOT WE AGREED ON AND...

OH... I FEEL SO ;BOO-HOO; ROTTEN!

YOU WON'T! BELIEVE ME!

BOTH THE DAY AND THIS STORY ARE DRAWING TO A CLOSE AS WILLY GUIDES THE TRUCK TO A DESERTED FIELD NORTH OF GOTHAM...

...AND WITHIN A MINUTE, HE IS JOINED BY THE JOKER DRIVING THE BIZARRE JOKERMOBILE...

NEAT CAR, ;SOB; JOKER!

AH YES--IT WAS INSPIRED BY THE BATMO... OH, NEVER MIND!

WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT MATTER TO DEAL WITH!

YOU'RE CRYING BECAUSE YOU COMMITTED A *SUCCESSFUL* CRIME, CORRECT?

YEAH! :SNIFF:

I HAVE BIG *NEWS* FOR YOU, CHUM--

--YOU *DIDN'T*--AND I'LL *PROVE* IT!

YOU THINK THIS TANK'S FULL OF MELTED *PLATINUM*?

TURN THE *TAP*! GO ON!

SP LOOSH

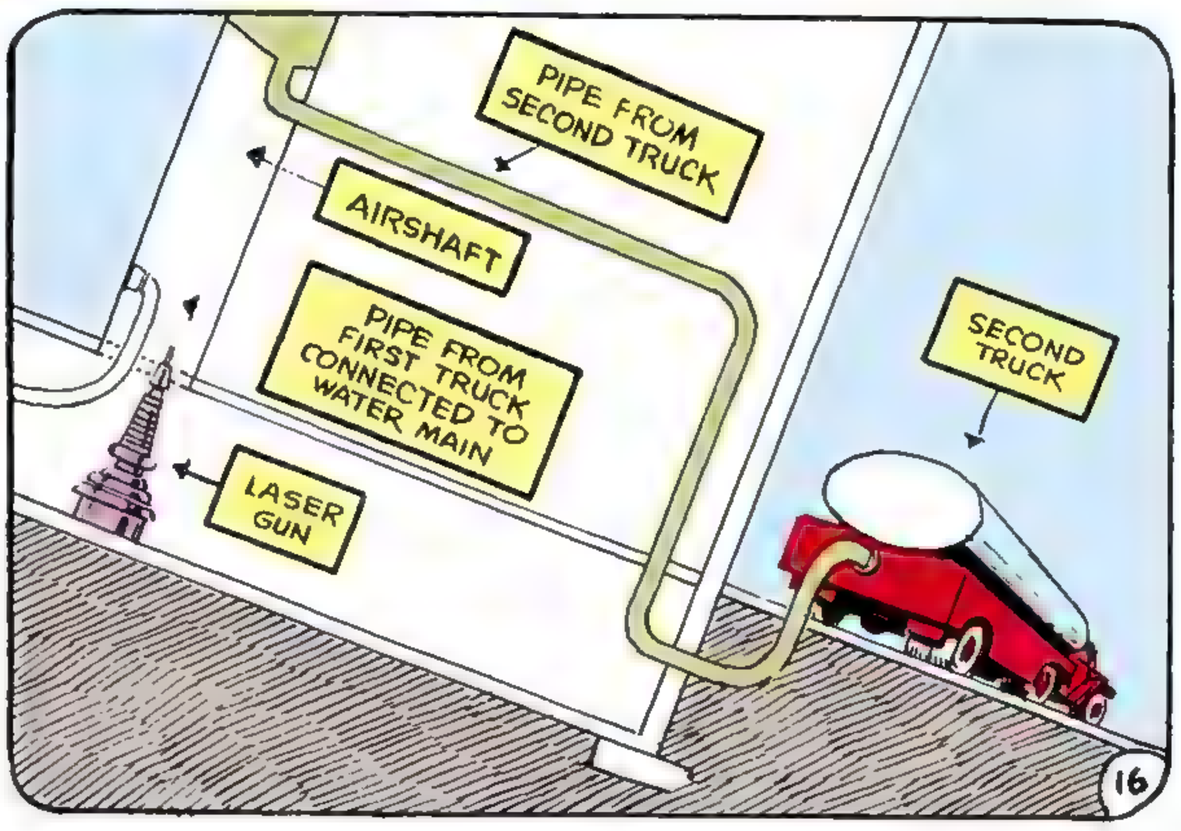
W-WATER--!?!

I'LL EXPLAIN HOW *DEVILISHLY* CLEVER I WAS, WILLY, OL' DUPE!

YOU SEE, I SLIPPED INTO CLEEVE'S BASEMENT *AHEAD* OF YOU!

"I CONNECTED *YOUR* HOSE TO A *WATER* MAIN--"

"--AND I RAN *ANOTHER* HOSE FROM HIGHER IN THE AIRSHAFT TO A *SECOND* TRUCK ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUILDING! *THAT'S* WHERE THE PLATINUM WENT!"



SKUNK! I'LL CLOBBER YOU!

UNGRATEFUL CAD! I DID WHAT YOU ASKED!

YOU'RE NOT SAD, ARE YOU?

NO! I'M FURIOUS!

SPLENDID! IN THE FUTURE, WHENEVER YOU'RE TEMPTED TO WEEP AND SURRENDER AFTER A CAPER, YOU NEED ONLY REMEMBER THIS MOMENT!

CALL ME MASTER PSYCHOLOGIST--

--AND DON'T BOTHER TO THANK ME! THE PLATINUM IS REWARD A-PLENTY!

TA-TA, WILLY!

YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME!

WHISTLING AND CHUCKLING, THE JOKER SPEEDS TO A DESERTED ROAD A FEW MILES DISTANT...

BEAUTIFUL--

--BEE-YOU-TI-FUL! WHAT'S IN THERE WILL FINANCE A YEAR OF FUN-AND-GAMES!

SMACK

DON'T BET ON IT, JOKER!

COMMISSIONER GORDON...

...THE FUZZ...

BENNY AND MARVIN!

WONDERING HOW WE CAUGHT YOU, JOKER? SIMPLE...

MARVIN HERE SPOTTED YOU AT CLEEVE'S AND FOLLOWED YOU!

I WAS LOOKING FOR BENNY AND I SAW YOU WALKING--

--LIKE GROUCHO MARX CROSSED WITH A STORK!

NO--:SOB:--NO! NOT JUST WHEN I PULLED THE BIGGEST CAPER OF MY :SNIFF: LIFE! :BAW!:

I FOLLOWED JOKER IN THE OTHER TRUCK... AND GOT HERE JUST IN TIME TO SEE HIM GET HIS!

NOW HE'S CRYING-- HA HA HA--

:SOB-- SOB:

HA HA HA

HA HA HA

NICE TEARFUL PERFORMANCE, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF! JUST USED A LITTLE ONION JUICE I HAD LEFT OVER!

I SPOTTED WILLY TAILING ME, SO I KNEW HE MUST BE WATCHING! I DECIDED IF I WEPT, IT WOULD GIVE HIM THE LAUGH HE NEEDED!

AND NEED IT HE WILL... WHEN I TELL THE POLICE WHO PLANNED THE PLATINUM JOB! HA-HA-HA!

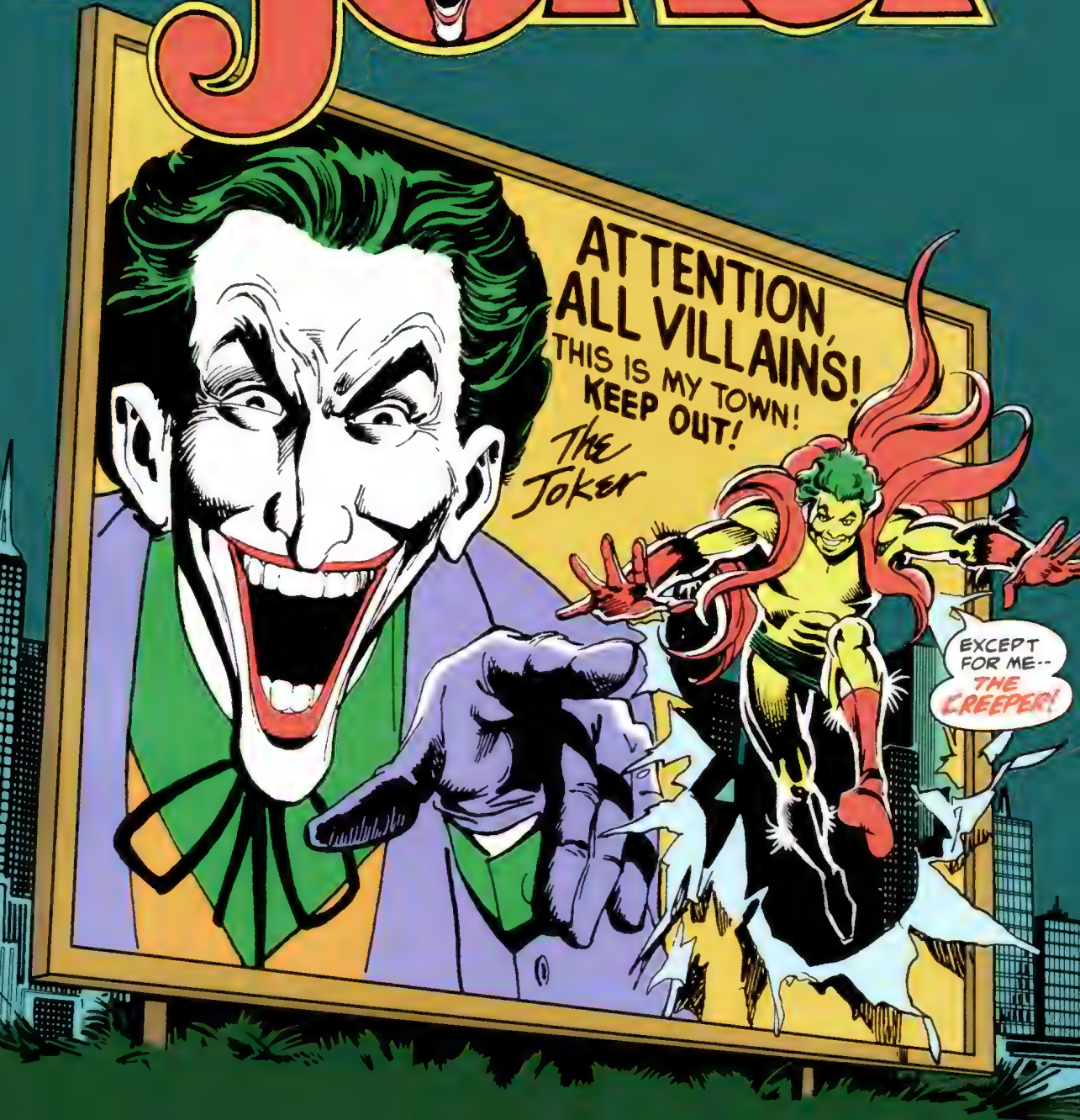
END

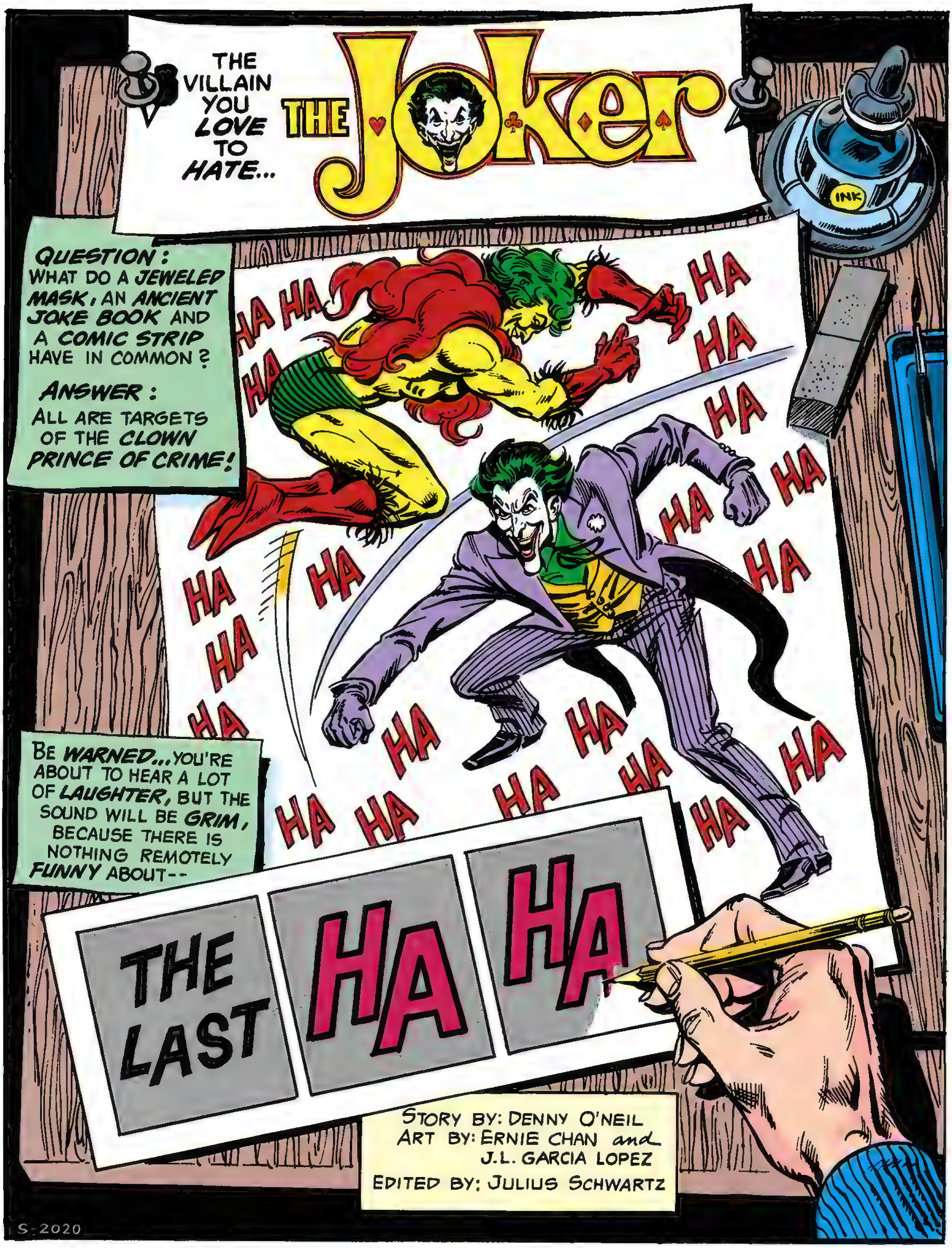
THE Joker
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
THE CLOWN PRINCE of CRIME vs. THE CREEPER!
25¢
NO. 3
OCT.
32443

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE Joker





Colorist: Joe Orlando

REMEMBER THESE GUYS? THEY'RE *BENNY KHISS* AND *MARVIN FARGO*, WHO ALWAYS SEEM TO BE TANGLING WITH *THE JOKER*...

THINGS HAVE BEEN QUIET SINCE WE SENT THAT CROOKED CLOWN BACK TO THE NUT HOUSE!

WE LOST THE JOB WE HAD THEN...

...BUT WE LUCKED INTO *THIS* JOB... GUARDING A SILLY *MASK!*

GIMME A CUPPA *COFFEE*, BENNY!

HEY... SOME KINDA *MIST* IS COMIN' FROM MY JUG... HA HA HA HA HA...

NOT... *MIST*... AH-HA-HA--

BONK ONK

--LAUGHING GAS...:OWWW!:

AT THAT MOMENT, THE *CURATOR* OF THIS PRIVATE MUSEUM ENTERS AND SHOUTS--

HA HA

HA HA

WHAT'S GOING *ON?*

HA HA

HA HA

KLUMB

HANSON MUSEUM
HA HA HA HA HA HA

LATER...THE HAPLESS CURATOR IS INTERVIEWED BY JACK RYDER OF WHAM-TV...
...HE STOLE A RARE JEWELED COMEDY MASK BELIEVED TO BE THE WORK OF CELLINI!
ANY IDEA OF THE THIEF'S IDENTITY?
WE KNOW...

QUIET, DUMMY!

YES, MISTER RYDER, I KNOW WHO IT WAS!
I GLIMPSED GREEN HAIR... AND HEARD A MANIACAL LAUGH--

--WHICH ADD UP TO JUST ONE MAN...AN OUTLAW--THE CREEPER!

NOW...EXCUSE ME! I MUST SEE OUR INSURANCE AGENT!
THE... CREEPER?
YOU GUYS LOOK LIKE YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN A PARKING TICKET... AND YOU DON'T OWN A CAR!--WHY?

HE SAID *THE CREEPER* SWIPED THE THINGUS! *MAYBE* HE'S *RIGHT*--

--ONLY *WE* WOULD'VE SWORN IT WAS *THE JOKER!*

SO THE CURATOR THINKS KHISS AND FARGO ARE DOPES, EH? WELL, *THEY* CAN GIVE HIM LESSONS IN CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION!

THAT THIEF *COULDN'T* HAVE BEEN *THE CREEPER*--

--BECAUSE *I'M THE CREEPER...AND* I POSITIVELY *DIDN'T* SWIPE THE MASK!

SO I'M DOUBLE-DARNED IF I'LL TAKE THE LOUSY *RAP!*

--WHICH IS THE CUE FOR OLD *FUNNY FACE* TO GET INTO THE *ACTION!*

IT'S NOT LONG SINCE I HELPED *THE BATMAN* TAKE *RÁS-AL-GHÚL*... AND NOW I'LL BE TACKLING ANOTHER OF HIS FOES!

JACK RYDER TOUCHES A TINY *ACTIVATOR* ATTACHED TO HIS *WATCHBAND*--

--AND AN *ASTONISHING* TRANSFORMATION OCCURS!...

I'VE A *VERY* GOOD IDEA WHERE *THE JOKER* WILL STRIKE *NEXT!* IT'S A *CRIME*--

--HE WON'T BE ABLE TO *RESIST!*

HAHA!

MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN...

STEP ON IT, JOE! WE GOTTA GET THIS BOOK TO THE *LIBRARY* BEFORE *CLOSING!*

IT'S A PRICELESS COPY OF THE WORLD'S VERY FIRST *JOKE BOOK*... PRINTED IN *LATIN!*

THEY'RE GONNA *DISPLAY* IT, AND...

HEY... ALL OF A SUDDEN, WE'RE NOT *MOVING!*

AN' EITHER WE'RE *FLYING*... OR SOMEBODY'S PULLING THE *STREET* AWAY!

HA-HA-HA-

HA HA HA

YOU...IN THE *CAR!* YOU HAVE A *CHOICE*...

YOU CAN HAND UP THOSE PAGES OF *RIB-TICKLERS*-- OR I SWITCH OFF THE *MAGNET* HOLDING YOU!

THE *FALL* WON'T HURT--

--BUT THE *STOP* WILL BE SIMPLY *SMASHING!* HA HA HA!

OKAY... *OKAY!* WE GET THE *POINT!*

WE *OUGHT* TO! THAT JOKE IS OLDER THAN THE BLASTED *BOOK!*

AS I *FIGURED*... *THE JOKER* AMBUSHED THE ANCIENT *GUISEPPE PENNERINI* VOLUME OF MIRTH!--HIS KIND OF *CAPER!*

HE'LL PROBABLY HEAD FOR THE *JOKERMOBILE* I SPOTTED!

THE SCREWBALL DOESN'T *REALIZE* IT YET--

--BUT HE'S ABOUT TO BE *INTERCEPTED*--

--BY A CHUCKLESOME *CREEPER!*

HA HA

HO HA HA

S-MAAASH!

THAT *LAUGH*... *YOU*?--THE *CREEPER!*

IN PERSON!

TELL YOU WHAT, PASTY-FACE--WE CAN HAVE A *LAUGHING CONTEST*... *FISTS* AT CLOSE QUARTERS...

...OR YOU CAN *SURRENDER!*

YOU OPT FOR THE *FIST*-ROUTE, HEY?

I DIDN'T THINK YOU *WENT* FOR THE OLD HAND-TO-HAND!

BUT I'M *GLAD* YOU DO! NEXT TO *ICE CREAM SODAS*, BIFFING BADDIES IS MY FAVORITE *RECREATION!*

SWING, WON'T YOU?

IT'S NO *FUN*...

...IF YOU JUST STAND AND GET *BIFFED!*

SPLITTING ALREADY? JOKER, YOU ARE A DISAPPOINTMENT! I AT LEAST EXPECTED YOU TO TRADE REPARTEE WITH ME!

YOU KNOW... GAGS... SNAPPY PATTER--

--SIDE-SPLITTERS ...EVEN HA-HA-HA'S?

MERCY! I AM DEFEATED... CRUSHED... WRECKED!

HE'S DAZED... HE CAN'T TELL WHERE I AM!

OKAY, JOKER-- ON YOUR FEET!

THEN... ACTIVATED BY A THREAD IN THE JOKER'S LAPEL, THE LEAD-WEIGHTED TAILS OF HIS COAT SLAM INTO THE CREEPER...

THERE'S GOING TO BE A SURPRISE ENDING TO THIS TALE--

--ONE THAT'S BOUND TO LEAVE YOU CHOKED UP! HA HA HA!

ADMIT IT! I'M NOT ONLY HILARIOUS, I LEAVE YOU BREATHLESS!

UNKNOWN TO EITHER ANTAGONIST, THE CREEPER'S ACTIVATOR SLIPS FROM HIS WRIST AND DROPS INTO THE JOKER'S POCKET--!

ENOUGH CHIT-CHAT!

BESIDES, YOU'RE WRINKLING MY SUIT!

HE'S UNCONSCIOUS... ALIVE, BUT SNOOZING!

WELL! AS LONG AS I'VE INHERITED A PRIME SUPER-HERO, I SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION!

AH-HA! GOT IT!

THAT NIGHT, IN THE JOKER'S HA-HACIENDA...

MMMM...THE KNOCK ON THE CREEPER'S CRANIUM WAS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT! HE'S STILL COUNTING SHEEP!

WHILE I WAIT, I'LL CONSULT THE PAPER FOR IDEAS!

--THAT IS, I'LL LOOK FOR IDEAS *AFTER* I CONSULT MY FAVORITE SECTION--THE *COMICS!*

SANDY SATURN'S A *GENIUS*... "CASHEWS" HAS MADE HIM RICH!

DICK STAR

CASHEWS

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?

CHARLIE CASHEW!

CHARLIE *WHAT?*

CASHEW!

By SANDY SATURN

GESUNDHEIT!

SANDY SATURN

RICH... YES, *RICH!*

OH, *GOOD!* I *HAVE* MY IDEA!--FOUND IN THE *FUNNIES!* HA-HA-HA

UNNGH

AH... MY CAPRICIOUS CAPTIVE *AWAKENS!*

W-WHERE *AM I? WHO* AM I?

HE DOESN'T *REMEMBER!* HE HAS *AMNESIA!*

THE GODS OF *NASTY* ARE *GRINNING* AT ME TONIGHT!

WHY AM I *BOUND?*

A *B-AAAD* MAN TIED YOU... THE SLIMY SLOB WHO DRAWS A *COMIC STRIP!* WHAT'S WORSE... HE'S ACCUSING *YOU* OF *CRIMES* THAT *HE* COMMITTED!

HE'S *ROTTEN* TO THE *CORE*--

--WHILE *I'M* YOUR *BUDDY!*

TELL YOU *WHAT*-- YOU *CATCH* HIM... BRING HIM TO *ME!*--

--AND I'LL *FORCE* HIM TO *ADMIT* HIS LIES... AND YOU'LL BE *CLEARED!* A *DEAL*--?

SURE... WHY NOT?

SO, THE NEXT MORNING, IN THE STUDIO OF CARTOONIST *SANDY SATURN*...

LISTEN, YOU MORONIC BODYGUARDS... GET YOUR BODS *OUTSIDE* AND MAKE SURE I'M NOT *DISTURBED!*

YESSIR!

WE WORK FOR HIM FOR *TEN YEARS* AND HE DON'T EVEN CALL US BY OUR *NAMES!*

HE LOST HIS TEMPER LONG AGO... AND IT'S *NEVER* BEEN FOUND!

THEY THINK I'M *ROTTEN*... GUESS I *AM!*

I USED TO BE A REAL *SWEETHEART*...

...BUT DRAWING THIS *CUTESY* TRASH GETS ON MY NERVES!

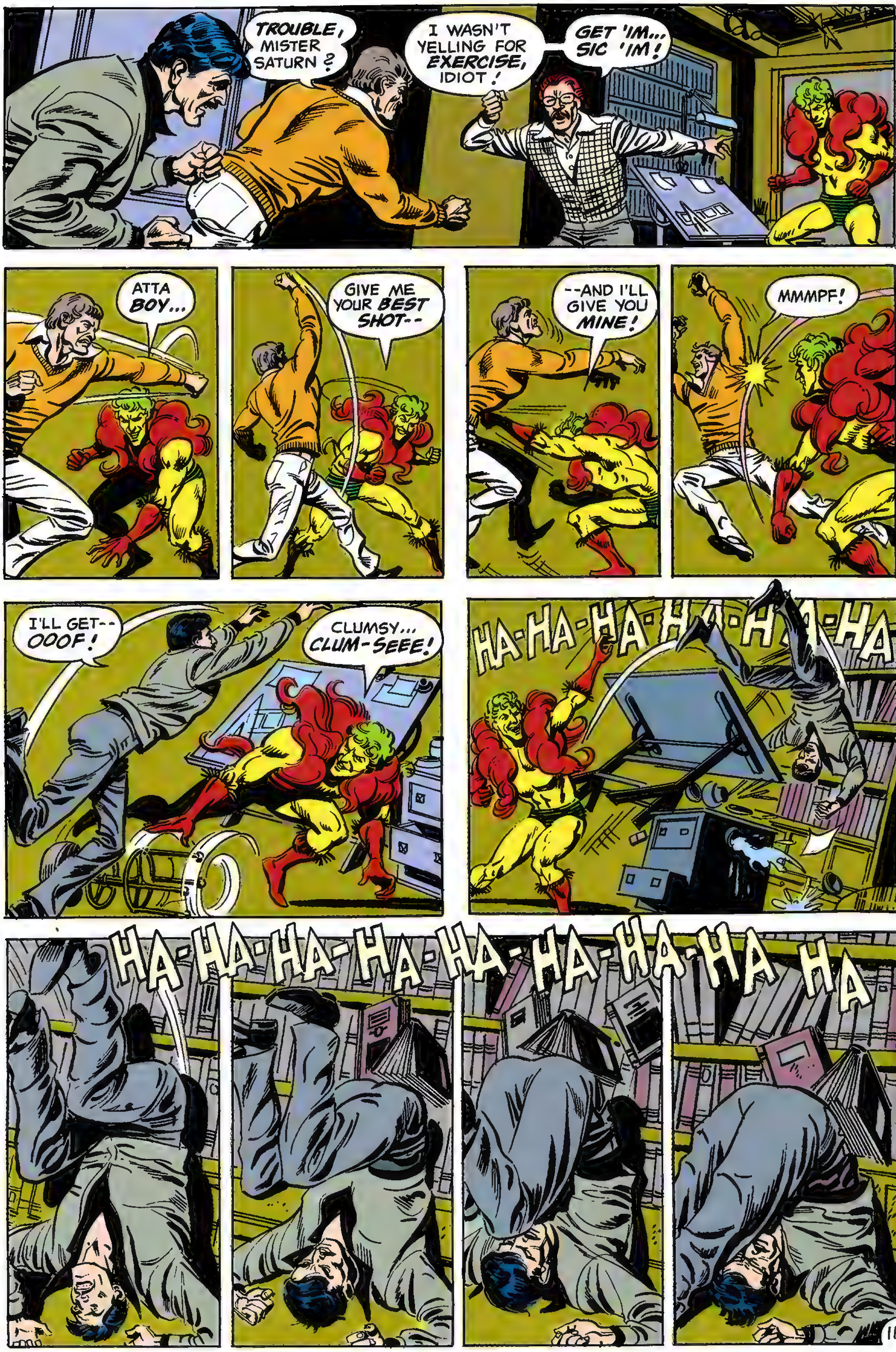
TURNS MY *STOMACH*... MEETING DEADLINES... BEING *WHIMSICAL* SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!

I SHOULDA BEEN A *STOCKBROKER*... *PLUMBER*... *HOBO*... *ANYTHING!* -- BUT NO... I HADDA BE *CREATIVE!*

YOU GOT A *NERVE*, DROPPING IN... DISTURBING ME! WHADDYA *WANT?*

YOU!

Y-YOU'RE THE... *C-C-C-REEPER!* *HELLP!*


TROUBLE, MISTER SATURN?
I WASN'T YELLING FOR EXERCISE, IDIOT!
GET 'IM... SIC 'IM!
ATTA BOY...
GIVE ME YOUR BEST SHOT--
--AND I'LL GIVE YOU MINE!
MMMPF!
I'LL GET-- OOOF!
CLUMSY... CLUM-SEEE!
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA HA

S-S-STAY BACK, OR--

--OR WHAT--

--LITTLE MAN?

OR--I WON'T GIVE YOU MY AU-AU-AUTOGRAPH!

HA-HA-HA-HA-

HA-HA-HA-HA-

-HA-HA-HA-HA-

A-HA-HA-HA-HA

HERE'S THE INK-SLINGER!

LEAVE HIM TO ME! I'LL PERSUADE HIM TO COOPERATE!

YOU CAN GO INTO THE NEXT ROOM AND WATCH TV!

AND...

GOOD EVENING! WELCOME TO THE WHAM-TV NEWS!

I'M WILLIAM BATSON, SUBSTI-TUTING FOR...ER-- JACK RYDER!

W TV AM EWS

RYDER... SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THAT NAME!

AT THE TOP OF THE NEWS... POLICE ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR THE CREEPER, BELIEVED TO HAVE STOLEN THE CELLINI MASK...

WHAM TV NEWS

IT'S TRUE! I AM AN OUTLAW... HUNTED!

I HADN'T REALLY BELIEVED IT...TILL NOW!

SOMETHING NAGGING AT MY MEMORY... BUT IT WON'T COME--

--CAN'T REMEMBER...

...CAN'T!

MEANWHILE...

SATURN, YOU CAN PLY YOUR INKY TRADE WHILE I EXPLAIN WHY I'VE HAD YOU BROUGHT TO ME!

YOU'RE ALL HEART!

YOU WILL INSTRUCT YOUR AGENT TO WITHDRAW ONE MILLION DOLLARS FROM WHEREVER YOU STASH YOUR LOOT, AND DELIVER SAME TO ME!

UPON RECEIPT, I SHALL RELEASE YOU!

LIKE I SAID... ALL HEART!

DRAWING "CASHEWS," EH?

WHAT ELSE?

I'M A BIG FAN OF YOURS! SAY... YOU COULD DO ME A FAVOR! DRAW ME IN THE STRIP--

--DRAW ME KICKING THE TYKE!

SHAKE, JOKER! FOR YEARS, I'VE WANTED TO BOOT THAT BRAT!

NOW YOU CAN SHOW ME DROWNING HIM! OH, BY THE WAY-- YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T ESCAPE?

NO CHANCE! I'M HAVING TOO MUCH FUN!

I'LL REJOIN YOU SHORTLY!

TIME TO DEAL WITH THE CREEPER!

I'LL PUT A SMALL BOMB IN THIS SATCHEL--

--ADD PAPERS ON TOP AND--

CREEPER, MY BOSOM PAL! I'VE SUCCEEDED!

SATURN HAS CONFESSED TO FRAMING ME?

EVEN BETTER! HE'S GIVEN ME PROOF OF YOUR INNOCENCE!

THE EVIDENCE IS IN THIS BAG!

I'LL PHONE THE MAYOR, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND THE POLICE CHIEF TO MEET US AT HEADQUARTERS!

THEY'LL GET A BANG OUT OF SEEING YOU! HA HA HA!

I AM DISGUSTINGLY CLEVER! WITH THE MAYOR, THE D.A., THE HEAD FUZZ-- AND THE CREEPER DEAD, THE TOWN WILL BE MY OYSTER!

WITHIN THE HOUR...

YOUR MOMENT OF TRIUMPH HAS ARRIVED, CREEPY!

GO ON IN! I'LL WAIT HERE!

...WAIT UNTIL I HEAR THE BOMB'S BOOM!

OH, I'M SO SMART I FEEL LIKE HUGGING MYSELF!

IN FACT... I WILL!

SUDDENLY, AN EXPLOSION WRACKS THE BUILDING--!

KA-WOOM

ZIP-A-DE-DO-DA! ZIP-A-DE-OOM-- MY-O-MY, WHAT A *WONDERFUL BOOM...*

HOWEVER ... *THE JOKER'S DITTY* WOULD BE A *DIRGE* IF HE COULD SEE THE EVENTS OF A FEW SECONDS *EARLIER--*

HUH--?

I'M *CHANGING...*

I'VE *CHANGED--*

--TO *JACK RYDER!*

AND THE *SHOCK* OF THE CHANGE HAS CAUSED ME TO RECALL *EVERYTHING!*

THE JOKER LIED ABOUT *SANDY SATURN--*

--AND HE *DOUBTLESSLY* LIED ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THIS *BAG!*

HE SURE *DID!* --*A BOMB...* SET TO EXPLODE IN *SECONDS!*

GOT TO GET *RID* OF IT!

AN *EMPTY OFFICE ...NOT* THE *BEST* SOLUTION ...

...BUT THE *ONLY* ONE IN *SIGHT!*

KA-WOOOM

HAVING STOPPED TO *CELEBRATE*, *THE JOKER* ARRIVES AT HIS *HA-HACIENDA* HIDEAWAY AT *MID-NIGHT*, AND...

STILL BUSY, *SATURN*?

--BUSY *WAITING*, *JOKER*--

--FOR *YOU*!

YOU DON'T *RECOGNIZE* ME--BUT WE'VE MET!

I WON'T OFFER YOU MY *HAND*... I'M A TRIFLE *CHOOSY*!

WILL YOU SETTLE FOR MY *FIST*?

I'LL GIFT YOU WITH ANOTHER *LOVE*-TAP AND DELIVER YOU TO THE *HEAT*!

READY--?

NOT *QUITE*--!

LACK INK

MY *EYES*--!

OUR POSITIONS ARE *REVERSED*! *MY* TURN TO BE A ROUGHNECK! *HA-HA-HA*!

MY VISION'S CLEARED... WON'T DO ME ANY *GOOD*, THOUGH!

EVEN *THE CREEPER'S* TERRIFIC STRENGTH CAN'T BREAK FREE OF THE GRIP OF A *HOMICIDAL MANIAC*!

AT THIS FATEFUL INSTANT, A TINY *DEVICE* DROPS ONTO THE TABLE...

MY *ACTIVATOR!* IT MUST'VE SLIPPED INTO *THE JOKER'S* POCKET WHEN WE WERE FIGHTING IN THE *JUNKYARD!*

HE MUST HAVE ACCIDENTALLY *PRESSED* IT AT THE POLICE STATION... *TRANSFORMING* ME!

INCREDIBLE LUCK... BUT IT WON'T *HELP* ME UNLESS I CAN REACH IT WITH MY *CHIN!*

CONTACT!

A RAW SURGE OF *POWER* AND *JACK RYDER* AGAIN BECOMES --

--THE CREEPER!?!

MY CHANGE CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE... HE'S LOST HIS *ADVANTAGE!*

I'M TOO *WEARY* TO TRADE FURTHER *WITTICISMS--*

--I PREFER JUST TO *FINISH* YOU! HA HA HA!

HA HA

CAN'T WE ;HEH-HEH; *TALK* THIS OVER--?

SOCCK

HA-HA-HA-HA

The End

THE JOKER
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
CO-STARRING GREEN ARROW
25¢
NO. 4
DEC.
32443

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

HEAR THIS, STAR CITY!

CLEAR THIS BRIDGE AND LET ME LEAVE TOWN...

...UNLESS YOU GET YOUR *KICKS* SEEING *DINAH LANCE* SPLATTERED HITHER AND YON!

THE *MAD JESTER OF CRIME* IS LOOSE IN THE HOME CITY OF...

GREEN ARROW

...AND THE LIFE OF THE WOMAN WHO IS SECRETLY *BLACK CANARY* HANGS BY A STRAND OF GREEN HAIR!

"A GOLD STAR for THE JOKER"

SCRIPT: *ELLIOT S! MAGGIN* ART: *J.L. GARCIA LOPEZ and V. COLLETTA* EDITOR: *JULIUS SCHWARTZ*

OLD SOL SNEAKS A PEEK OVER THE HORIZON AT THE VENERABLE *ARCHWAY BRIDGE* AND THE INTERCITY BUS THAT ROLLS ALONE AHEAD OF THE RUSH HOUR...

...BEFORE THE SUN RAISES ITS RAYS, BRINGING DAWN TO THE COLONIAL HARBOR TOWN THAT GREW TO BECOME *STAR CITY*...

WELCOME TO STAR CITY

THE FEW WHO AT THIS HOUR SCURRY ABOUT THE STREETS IN ANTICIPATION OF A WORK DAY...

...ARE ALREADY TOO PREOCCUPIED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE BUS FROM *GOTHAM* THAT CARRIES ONLY A DRIVER...

...UNTIL THE BUSMAN'S OWN ATTENTION IS CAUGHT...

FLOWER SHOPPE

SCREECH!

OH, MISS... *MISS!* ARE YOU OPEN FOR *BUSINESS?*

HACK IS THE NAME, MY LOVELY LADY! --HARRY HACK!

AND WHAT MIGHT YOU BE CALLED, MY VISION OF BEAUTY?

D-DINAH!... AND I SUPPOSE THE STORE'S OPEN...

...THOUGH I REALLY WANTED TO CLEAN IT UP A BIT FIRST!

DINAH! WELL, I SHOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE ELEVEN RED ROSES, DINAH...

...WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR LAST NAME WAS?

I WAS AVOIDING SAYING ANYTHING -- AND ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T MEAN TWELVE, MR. HACK?

D. LANCE PROPRIETOR

I MEANT ELEVEN! ELSE I WOULD HAVE SAID TWELVE, DINAH... LANCE! I AM PRONOUNCING IT RIGHT, YES?

AND PLEASE CALL ME HARRY-- THOUGH IT ISN'T MY REAL NAME, OF COURSE!

D. LANCE PROPRIETOR

ALL RIGHT, HARRY... OR WHO-EVER YOU ARE... WANT TO SAY ANYTHING ON THE CARD THIS COMES WITH?

INDEED I DO, TO WIT:

"THESE ELEVEN BEAUTIES- COMMA- HELD NEXT TO YOU- COMMA- SURELY MAKE A LOVELY DOZEN- EXCLAMATION POINT!"

HOW ROMANTIC!... DO YOU WANT THESE DELIVERED OR--

NO, LOVE OF MY LIFE...

...I'LL EAT THEM HERE! ACTUALLY--

--THEY'RE FOR YOU!

HAVING SO SHOWN HIS LADYLOVE THAT HE DOES INDEED EXIST...

...THE WRETCHED CREATURE IS DAZZLED BY HER CHARM AND EMBARRASSED AT HIS LOWLINESS...

...AND BEATS A HASTY, YET UNGRACEFUL, RETREAT!

TRAILWAYS CO.

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL CAR PARK TURN RIGHT AT 39TH STREET

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

I BORROWED THIS BUS FROM YOUR COMPANY BRANCH IN *GOTHAM*...

CRASH!

...AND I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASIER TO SHIP BACK IN SMALLER PIECES!

BEFORE THE STARTLED ONLOOKERS CAN DROP THEIR JAWS, THE MAD BUS DRIVER LEAPS TO A RAFTER OF THE UNDERGROUND DEPOT ...

HA-HA-HA-HA

...TUMBLES UPWARD TO ANOTHER LEVEL OF THE PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL!..

HA-HA-HA-HA

STOP HIM! STOP THAT LUNATIC!

BY THE TIME THE FORCES OF ORDER HAVE CAUGHT THEIR BREATH ENOUGH TO PURSUE THE MANIAC, HE HAS SAFELY REACHED THE ROOF AND ...

SHE LOVES ME... SHE LOVES ME NOT... SHE LOVES ME... SHE LOVES ME NOT...

...SHE LOVES ME... LOVES ME... LOVES ME...

AND ELSEWHERE, LATER THAT DAY...

I'LL TAN HIS BOTTOM *RAW!*

I'LL TWIST HIS HEAD SO FAR, HE'LL BE STARING HIMSELF IN THE *EYE!*

OLIVER...!

OLIVER *QUEEN!*

I DON'T KNOW HOW ON EARTH YOU COULD BE JEALOUS OF A ZANY MAN --

--WHO HAS PROBABLY BEEN ON THE ROAD SO LONG HE'S FORGOTTEN WHETHER OR NOT WOMEN HAVE TAILS!

LISTEN... WAS THIS "ZANY MAN" ABOUT SIX-FOOT-TWO, VERY THIN AND BALD?

WELL...YES...HE WAS, AS A MATTER OF FACT!

BUT HOW DID YOU--

YOUR SUITOR IS SOME KIND OF LUNATIC WHO STOLE A BUS FROM GOTHAM TWO DAYS AGO AND TURNED UP THIS MORNING...

...RETURNING IT SPECIAL DELIVERY TO THE STAR CITY BUS TERMINAL... AND NEARLY KILLING SOMEONE IN THE PROCESS!

D. LANCE PROPRIETOR

THE POLICE-BAND RADIO!

ATTENTION ALL UNITS! A REPORTED JEWEL ROBBERY AND MASS MURDER ON THE CORNER OF LEXINGTON AND BROOME!

THAT'S DOWN THE BLOCK!

THERE IS NO PATROL CAR IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY!

ALSO REPORTED IS A WATER-MAIN BREAK!

NO NEED FOR DINAH TO DO HER BLACK CANARY NUMBER...

...WHEN THERE'S A GREEN ARROW AROUND!

...AND SEVERAL MULTI-ALARM FIRES--

AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING CONTAINING THE FLOWER SHOP...

--FURTHER REPORTS AS THEY COME IN... OVER AND *OUT!*

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE ADDED, "THERE'S *HAMBURGER* ALL OVER THE HIGHWAY"... JUST TO CONFUSE HIM!

I KNEW WHEN I MET THAT *DINAH LANCE* GIRL THAT THE FACT A CREATURE LIKE SHE *EXISTS*...

...WOULD CRAMP MY STYLE... SLOW ME DOWN... KEEP ME TOO PREOCCUPIED THINKING ABOUT *HER!*

I REALIZED THE ONLY SOLUTION WOULD BE TO *MARRY* HER--

--OR *KILL* HER!

OLIVER QUEEN--AS *GREEN ARROW*--HAS SLIPPED INTO ACTION THROUGH A REAR EXIT WHILE THE *CRIME CLOWN* WATCHES THE FRONT...

THE PHONY POLICE-DISPATCH BROUGHT THE CUSTOMER RUNNING OUT--BUT NO TALL, BLOND MAN, OR...

...AHA!

MY PROUD, RAVEN-HEADED BEAUTY IS EMERGING...

--A JOKER JACK-IN-THE-BOX FISHNET!

I OUGHT TO *PATENT* IT!

FLOWER SHOPPE

...TO A CLEVER *SURPRISE* IN THE FORM OF--

WH-WHAT IS THIS?!

HELP! SOMEBODY! THAT POOR GIRL'S BEEN CAUGHT LIKE A FLOUNDER!

I EXPECTED MORE WITNESSES...

...BUT A PEA-POP WILL KEEP THIS ONE FROM YELLING UP A CROWD!

TOC!

WILL SOMEBODY CALL--OH, HO! SOMETHING POKED ME IN THE NECK!

--NOW ISN'T THAT A PAIN IN THE NECK! TEE-HEE...HA HA!

HA! HA! HA! MAKES ME; HEH-HEH: LAUGH! HO HO!

THE MINUTES TICK AWAY AS ANOTHER MAN SWINGS INTO THE PICTURE-- A MAN IN A SUIT OF GREEN...

FUNNY... THERE WAS NO EMERGENCY DOWN THE--

HEY, THAT MAN IN THE STREET LOOKS LIKE THE CUSTOMER IN DINAH'S SHOP A MINUTE AGO!

MY... GOD! THAT GRIN-- IT'S THE LAUGHING DEATH! THAT MEANS...

THE JOKER!!

BUT THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME* AND *DINAH* ARE, TO *GREEN ARROW'S* HORROR, NOWHERE TO BE FOUND, AS LATER ...

I'M JUST CROSSING THE BRIDGE INTO TOWN NOW, BOSS!

ER--I DON'T KNOW-- WHAT *IS* GOLD WITH ZEBRA STRIPES AND FIVE POINTS?

THE *STAR WE'RE* GOING TO STEAL!

AND--*HA HA HA*--I *LIED* ABOUT THE *STRIPES!*

I'LL MEET YOU AT THE APPOINTED SPOT-- WITH A NEW *FRIEND* I FOUND!

AT A *STAR CITY* POLICE PRECINCT HOUSE...

THANKS FOR REPORTING THE MISSING PERSON, *GA*--YOU'RE WELCOME TO HANG AROUND WAITING FOR A DEVELOPMENT!

WHAT'S THIS "*THANK YOU KINDLY*" GARBAGE AS YOUR GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?

DO YOU REALIZE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT *THE JOKER*--ONE OF THE MOST VICIOUS *HOMICIDAL MANIACS* ON RECORD?

CAN YOU SUGGEST ANYTHING BUT TO *WAIT* TILL WE HAVE MORE TO GO ON?

I DON'T SUPPOSE I--EH?

WHAT'D YOU SAY... THE *BRIDGE* IS RATTLING--THE *ARCHWAY BRIDGE?*

SLAM!

HEY, *GREEN ARROW*--THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD BE...

GREEN ARROW? WHERE THE BLAZES...?

AS THAT GOES ON AT THE POLICE STATION, *THIS* GOES ON AT THE *ARCHWAY BRIDGE*...

HEY! BACK OFF!

THE WHOLE BRIDGE IS BEING *SHAKEN DOWN*...

...BY THAT SCREWY *TRUCK* UP AHEAD!

WELCOME TO STAR CITY

THE CABLE HAS ABOUT HAD IT, *BOSS!*

TIME FOR US TO BARREL OUT OF HERE, DEAR LADY!

WE MUST *POSITION* OURSELVES MOST *CAREFULLY*, YOU SEE!

YOU'RE *CRAZY!* WHAT CAN YOU HOPE TO *GAIN* FROM THIS?

WEL STA

MEY TY

I'M A GENUINE, CARD-CARRYING LOCK-YOU-UP-THROW-AWAY-THE-KEY *LUNATIC!*

I CAN DO *WHATEVER* I WANT BECAUSE *I'M NOT LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE* FOR MY ACTIONS...

CRAZY IS *EXACTLY* WHAT I AM!

MY *LEGAL RESIDENCE* IS A HOME FOR THE *CRIMINALLY INSANE!*

...THE *STATE* IS!

HA-HA

HA-HA

THAT *LAUGH*--! UNMISTAKABLY THAT OF--

--THE JOKER!

WELCOME TO STAR CITY

GIVE IT UP, FELLA! YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE NOW!

OUT OF MY LEAGUE...?

JOKER

HA-HA-HA

...I'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO FIRE OFF A BOLO-ARROW!

HA-HA

THAT'S A LAUGH!

WHILE THAT MIRTHFUL MANIAC IS HAVING HIS YOKS...

I'M SO GOOD...

...AT THIS ARCHERY STUFF...

...IT SCARES EVEN ME!

WHAT THE DEVIL--?

KER-RASSSSSH!

THE CAR'S OUT OF CONTROL!

JOKER

VROOOM

THWIPT

TCHOKK!

GREEN ARROW! IT'S A BOOBY-TRAP! DON'T--

--PUNCTURE IT!

FEEZZZZ!

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

HAH! HAH! HAH!

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

THE LAUGHING GAS DISSIPATES AND THE GREEN-CLAD HERO DRAGS HIS BATTERED PRIDE OFF TO THE POLICE STATION, WHERE...

...AND THAT'S WHAT THE *TRUCK* LOOKED LIKE--BUT I DON'T SEE HOW MY DESCRIPTION WOULD BE OF ANY--

WELL, A REPORT ON AN *ABANDONED TRUCK* OF THAT DESCRIPTION JUST CAME IN...

...SO I'M GIVING THE ORDER TO BREAK INTO IT AND SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND INSIDE!

AT THAT MOMENT, SOMEWHERE ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BRIDGE...

MARRY ME, PRETTY DINAH... SO I CAN LET YOU LIVE, YOU SEE!

NOT IF YOU WERE THE *LAST CLOWN* ON--

BOSS! COME IN... THIS IS *HECTOR*!

MAYBE THIS NEWS IS A REASON TO LET YOU LIVE LONGER!

HOW NOW, *HECTOR*? YOU SAY THE POLICE HAVE BROKEN INTO THE BACK OF THE *TRUCK*...

...AND THEY SAY THEY'RE GOING TO REPLACE THE *STAR* ON THE BRIDGE *IMMEDIATELY*?

WE'LL BE THERE WITH *BELLS* ON!

AS THE ARCHER LEAVES THE PRECINCT HOUSE...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MADMAN WANTS WITH *DINAH*...

...BUT IF HE'S ABANDONED WHATEVER PURPOSE HE HAD IN STEALING THE *GOLDEN STAR*, THEN--

POLICE

WAITAMINNIT!

HE HASN'T *ABANDONED* THE IDEA AT *ALL*! IT'S NOT THE *REAL STAR* THE POLICE FOUND!

DON'T WALK

THE CAR CARRIED THE *STAR* TO THE *OPPOSITE* SIDE OF THE BRIDGE AND THERE'S *NO WAY* IT COULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO *THIS* SIDE SO QUICKLY!

INDEED, AS THE POLICE VEHICLES RAISE THE *STAR* TO THE TOP OF THE ARCHWAY WELCOMING TRAVELERS TO *STAR CITY*...

VERY GOOD... VERY GOOD!

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...

...THEY PUT UP THE *BOOBY-TRAPPED STAR* AS WE, UNSEEN, PREPARE TO RAISE OURSELVES TO THE HEIGHTS--

--A MIRTHFUL *MASTER OF MAYHEM* WITH HIS LOVELY HOSTAGE--

--WHO TOGETHER, FROM THEIR LOFTY GOLDEN PERCH, WILL HOLD THE CITY AT THEIR *MERCY!*

YOU HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT YET WHAT'S WITH THE NEW *STAR*, HAVE YOU?

WOULD YOU BELIEVE THERE ARE THESE LOVELY *LAUGHING DEATH* RADIATION SOURCES IN THE LOWER POINTS OF THE NEW STAR...

...WHICH WILL *KILL* DRIVERS OF THE CARS THAT PASS BELOW SO *QUICKLY* THAT THEIR CARS. WILL PILE UP TO BLOCK OFF THE *ENTIRE BRIDGE*--

--CUTTING OFF ACCESS OF THE NEAREST POLICE STATION TO THE *ART MUSEUM* ON THE FAR SIDE...

...WHOSE PRICELESS DISPLAY OF PORCELAIN *CLOWN FIGURES* WILL SOON BE MINE! APPROPRIATE, YES?

BUT THE MOMENT THE TWO STEP OUT ONTO THE ARCH-WAY, THEIR EARS ARE ASSAULTED BY THE PEAL OF SIRENS AND THE FLASH OF SEARCHLIGHTS...

SCREEEE

GAME'S OVER, *CUDDLES!*

I'LL TAKE THE LADY HOME NOW!

AND BEFORE EITHER HAS TIME TO REACT TO ONE SURPRISE...

SNAP!

THANKS FOR THE *CIRCULATION, GREEN ARROW!*

YOU WASTED PRECIOUS MOMENTS FREEING THE LITTLE GIRL, *ARROW!* MOMENTS I'LL USE TO TAKE YOUR...

UNN!

DID I SAY, *LITTLE GIRL?!*

THAT'LL TEACH YOU TO UNDER-ESTIMATE A *WOMAN!*

AND *THIS'LL* TEACH YOU NOT TO LEAVE YOUR *CHIN* UNGUARDED!

Sock!

FEZZ

KOFF KOFF

HA! YOU THINK TO STOP *ME* WITH PHYSICAL FORCE? *I* MIGHT BE *INSANE...*

KOFF KOFF

KOFF KOFF

...BUT *YOU* ARE *CRAZY!* AND THE LADY IS UNABLE TO ACT FOR THE *MOMENT!*

THAT SHOULD TAKE THE WIND OUT OF YOU!

URRFF!

WELCOME TO STAR CIT

THUCK

YOU SAVED YOURSELF, ARCHER...

...BUT HOW DO YOU THINK THIS UNARMED GIRL WILL DO, FORMIDABLE AS SHE SEEMS...

...AGAINST STRENGTH BORN OF WHAT YOU CALL *MADNESS...?*

NO! YOU MIGHT HIT HIS HOSTAGE!

THE POLICE ARE HELPLESS! IT'S UP TO MY *BOW* AND ME--

--AND THE HOPE THAT THE *CLOWN* DOESN'T HAVE THE GUTS TO KNOCK OFF *DINAH!*

SNAP

AH, *GREEN ARROW*-- HOPES BORN OF DESPERATION ARE OFTEN AS MAD AS THE *JOKER* HIMSELF...

TOO BAD--WE COULD HAVE MADE SUCH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER...

...BUT YOU PROBABLY SING OFF-KEY!

SNAP!!

OHH... IT'S ALL OVER!

I WAS *SURE* HE WOULDN'T CUT IT!

DINAH! GRAB THE ROPE!

ZINNNG

I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD *THAT* WILL...

MY GOD! OLIVER'S ARROW SLICED THROUGH THIS ROPE LIKE *THREAD* THROUGH A *NEEDLE*!

CAN THAT BLASTED *GREEN MAN* BE GIVING THE WENCH A *REPRIEVE*?

I COULDN'T *STAND* IT IF--

--MY *BALANCE*! I'M *LOSING* IT!

THE HOLLOW TIP OF THE ARROW COLLAPSED AGAINST THE FAR *ARCHWAY*-- AND EXPOSED A *SUCTION* DEVICE TO HOLD IT THERE!

OLIVER!... I LOVE YOU!

TCHOKK!

AND INSTEAD OF THE WOMAN, IT IS THE *MAD JESTER* WHO TUMBLES TOWARD THE DARK, CHOPPY RIVER TONIGHT...

THAT'S *MAD*... *INSANE!*

NOBODY CAN SHOOT AN ARROW INTO THE WIND THAT ACCURATELY! IT'S *CRAZY!*

IT MADE ME LOSE MY BLASTED BALANCE!

OH, THIS IS *LAUGHABLE*... TOO *FUNNY* FOR *WORDS!*

SO FUNNY I'M GOING TO *DIE--LAUGHING!*

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA...

AS THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME* FALLS TO SEEMINGLY CERTAIN DOOM, THE ARCHER STANDS WONDERING...

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

...HOW MANY LIVES HAS *THE JOKER'S* LIFE ENDED...HOW MANY LEFT IN SMOULDERING RUIN?

A SUDDEN WHIRLPOOL SEEMS TO MATERIALIZE RIGHT WHERE THE *HARLEQUIN OF HATE* FALLS--

WELCOME TO STAR CITY

SPLASH

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

--AS SOMEONE WITHOUT THE BREATH LEFT TO VOICE THE WORDS, THINKS...

"...'TWAS BEAUTY KILLED THE BEAST!"

END

THE JOKER

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME BATTLES THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG!

25¢ NO. 5 FEB. 32443

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

EC

ACCORDING TO THE RULES...

THE JOKER

...BEATS ANY CARD IN THE DECK!

BUT RULES ARE MADE TO BE ***BROKEN***--WHEN THE GAME PITS THE ***MIRTHFUL MALEFACTOR*** AGAINST THE ***ROYAL FLUSH GANG!***

AND WITH THE ***CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME*** IN THAT GAME, YOU CAN BE SURE IT WON'T BE PLAYED ACCORDING TO ***HOYLE***...ESPECIALLY WHEN--

The Joker Goes "WILDE"!

MORE FELONIOUS FUN FROM:

MARTIN PASKO --WHO ***DEALT*** THE SCRIPT!	***IRV NOVICK & TEX BLAISDELL*** --WHO ***GRANDSLAMMED*** THE ART!	***JULIUS SCHWARTZ*** --WHO ***SHUFFLED*** IT ALL AROUND A BIT!

and ***ALFRED BESTER*** -- WHO KIBBITZED!

IT IS 4 A.M. AND MOST CITIZENS HAVE SETTLED INTO SLUMBER FOR ANOTHER NIGHT...

BUT FOR THE NIGHT-WATCHMAN OF THIS WAREHOUSE--IT MIGHT AS WELL BE *NOON*...

AX WAREHOUSE

...AND TIME FOR A LEISURELY--IF SOMEWHAT LONELY--LUNCH...

WELL, MAYBE *NOT* SO LONELY...

I DON'T *GET* IT, BOSS--WHAT *IS* THAT THING?

A *WHOOPEE-CUSHION*, IGNORAMUS!

SIT ON IT, AND IT MAKES A MOST *EMBARRASSING* NOISE!

EXCEPT *THIS* ONE IS A BIT *NOISIER* THAN MOST...

BA-OOM

...AND *I'M* THE ONE WHO GETS TO SAY "*WHOOPEE*"!

HA, HA, HA, HA!

MINUTES LATER, DEEP WITHIN THE WAREHOUSE...

AH--HERE *IT* IS!

HUH? IT'S JUST A BOX, *JOKER*!

HUMORESQUE NOVELTY CO. WILDEWOOD, WISCONSIN

I THOUGHT YA SAID THIS GIG HAD SOMETHIN' TO DO WITH *ART*--!?

CORRECT, NUMBSKULL--BUT WE'RE NOT HERE FOR ART TREASURES--BECAUSE I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ART!

I DO, HOWEVER, KNOW WHAT I LIKE...

HUMORESQUE NOVELTY CO. WILDEWOOD, WISCONSIN

...AND I ABSOLUTELY ADORE... THIS!

DIARY

NOVELTIES? A BOX O' PRACTICAL JOKES?

BUT YOU SAID ART--

OH, DIDN'T I TELL YOU--? THAT WAS THE NIGHT-WATCHMAN'S NAME--

--ART!

HA HA HA

LATER...AT A TRAILER-CAMP... IN THE HO-HOME-ON-WHEELS--THE MOBILE VERSION OF THE JOKER'S HA-HACIENDA...

MAN! YA SHOULDA SEEN THE BOSS GLOMMIN' THAT BOX OF GIGGLE-GADGETS LIKE IT WAS GOLD!

THAT "STUFF" IS GOLD TO ME, MY MORONIC MISCREANTS!

THEY WILL MAKE DEADLY PLAYTHINGS--AFTER SOME... ER...ADJUSTMENTS, OF COURSE! HA! HA!

BY THE WAY, ANYTHING OF INTEREST IN THAT LOCAL NEWSPAPER?

NAW--JUST SOME NOTICE ABOUT AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY SOME DUDE NAMED WILDE!

WILDE--? LET ME SEE THAT RAG, YOU CRETIN!

HMM... VERY INTERESTING!

Y-NEWS

WEATHER REPORT

2 SECTIONS

WEEK OF AUG 29-30

WILDEWOOD TO COMMEMORATE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF NAMESAKE PAINTER, THADDEUS V. WILDE!

RARE WORKS TO BE EXHIBITED AT LIBRARY.

TS FOUND!

THE MEMORY OF FAMED AMERICAN PAINTER THADDEUS V. WILDE WILL LIVE AGAIN THIS WEEK AS HIS NAME, WILDE-

ES AN EXHIBITION, GALA CELEBRATION

STOOGES, MAKE PREPARATIONS!

WE ARE GOING ON A TRIP!

3

3

TIME: 24 HOURS LATER./
LOCATION: WILDEWOOD, WISCONSIN!
SCENE: THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE...

SOMEONE TO SEE YOU, SHERIFF!
SAYS HIS NAME IS...
...WILDE-- ARTHUR WILDE!
DEPUTY

THE PAINTER'S--?
2007
--GREAT-GRANDSON!
I'VE COME TO HELP HONOR HIS MEMORY!

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE YOU, MR. WILDE!
IT'S BEEN 30 YEARS SINCE YOU LEFT WILDEWOOD AND NO ONE KNEW WHERE--
-- I'VE BEEN ABROAD! I HEARD YOU'LL BE EXHIBITING SOME OF GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S MOST VALUABLE CANVASES--
TOWN HALL
NO PARKING
WILDEWOOD CELEBRATES THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THADDEUS Y. WILDE AMERICAN PAINTER, 1876 - 1976
LIBRARY
WILDE PAINTINGS

--AND HOPED YOU'D SHOW "THE LAUGHING MAN"!
I'VE NEVER SEEN IT!
FEW ART EXPERTS BELIEVE IT EXISTS!
IT'S PROBABLY A MYTH-- LIKE SHAKESPEARE'S LOST MANUSCRIPTS!
TELL YOU WHAT, THOUGH-- WE'RE FLYING IN SOME CANVASES TOMORROW, UNDER ARMED GUARD!
WILL YOU JOIN THE MAYOR AND ME TO RECEIVE THEM--?
I'D BE DELIGHTED!

ANOTHER 24-HOUR JUMP IN TIME TAKES US TO A SECLUDED AREA JUST OUTSIDE WILDEWOOD...
THE BOSS GOES INTO TOWN WHILE WE STAY OUT HERE IN THE BOONDOCKS?
WILDEWOOD 2 MI
WHAT'S HE DOIN' THERE?

WHO KNOWS WHAT THAT CLOWN'S GOT PLANNED?
I THOUGHT HE WASN'T INTERESTED IN ART!
YOU EXPECT A NUT-CASE LIKE THE JOKER TO BE CONSISTENT?

BEEEEP! BEEP!
HEY! THE BOSS' SIGNAL! LET'S GO!
208769

WHILE ATOP THE *WILDEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY*...

AN ARMORED HELICOPTER WILL LAND HERE, MR. WILDE--TO DELIVER *FOUR* OF THE PAINTINGS FOR THE EXHIBIT!

WE DON'T EXPECT ANY PROBLEMS, BUT WE'RE KEEPING *TIGHT SECURITY* ANYWAY!

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, WHERE A DEPUTY IS GUARDING THE STAIRWELL TO THE ROOF...

DON'T MOVE!

A GUY... DRESSED LIKE A *CARD?*

HOW... HEH-HEH... *FUNNY*...

SO FUNNY... *HA! HAH!* IT ABSOLUTELY... *HA-HA*...

...*SLAYS* ME!

HA-HA-HA--

;AACCKK!;

DEAD--AND I DIDN'T EVEN *TOUCH* HIM!

MUSTA BEEN SOMETHING IN HIS COFFEE!

AS THE WHIRLYBIRD COMES IN FOR A LANDING...

...THE KNAVE SIGNALS WITH HIS *LANCE*...

...AND FOUR MORE **CARD-CRIMINALS** APPEAR...

IN THE ENSUING CONFUSION, "MR. WILDE" SLIPS AWAY...

IT'S A **ROBBERY** ATTEMPT! DRAW YOUR **GUNS!**

I WOULDN'T **DO** THAT WITH THE **MAYOR** HERE, SHERIFF...

...UNLESS YOU WANT TO NICKNAME HIM "HIS HONOR, THE **SHISH KEBAB**"!

A **LIVING QUEEN OF SPADES**...TOSSING A **CARD** AT US--?!

THE **FOUR OF SPADES**-- REPRESENTING **PEACE**...

...WHICH WILL MAKE YOU SO **PEACEFUL**, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT **FALL ASLEEP!**

NOW, JACK-- THE LANCE!

GOT IT!

MEANWHILE, BEHIND THE STAIRWELL...

NOW TO JOIN MY VAPID VILLAINS!

AND A MOMENT LATER--IN A SECLUDED CORNER OF THE ROOF...

BOSS--DID YA SEE? WE GOT COMPANY!

OF THAT, I'M AWARE-- BUT NOT TO WORRY!

THEY MAY BE FLASHY, BUT THEY'RE STRICTLY AMATEUR NIGHT!

Jack in the Box

THE AUDACITY OF THOSE LOUTS--PATTERNING THEMSELVES AFTER PLAYING CARDS! THAT'S MY MODUS OPERANDI!

FLIP!

THIS WILL TEACH THEM THAT THE JOKER BEATS ANY CARD IN THE DECK!

AND OUT OF THE "JOKER-IN-THE-BOX" POPS...

SPROINNG!

...A LADDER WITH TEETH!...

...WHICH LATCH ONTO THE HELICOPTER'S UNDER-CARRIAGE...

SNAP!

THE KNAVE IS GROUNDED AND UNARMED! ANNIHILATE HIM, BOYS! HA HA HO HO!

WHILE THE JOKER MAKES HIS PLAY BELOW, ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT TAKES SHAPE ABOVE...

BUDDA-BUDDA-

FIRST WE PERFORATE THE FUSELAGE WITH ACID-TIPPED SPADE-PIPS...

...AND *THEN*, *KING OF SPADES*, DO YOUR *STUFF*!

CHUCK! WE GOT *TROUBLE*... IN *SPADES*!

HERE-- TAKE A CARD--

--NOT JUST *ANY* CARD! THE *THREE OF CLUBS*-- THE CARD SIGNIFYING *GENEROSITY*!

YOU WANT *PAINTINGS*? HERE--*PRESENTS*, FROM ME TO YOU!

MEANWHILE...

NO FOUR-FLUSHERS CAN SPOIL MY GAME!

...AND ON THE ROOF...

UH-OH! *JACK'S* GOT HIS HANDS FULL WITH "THREE-OF-A KIND"!

THE SOLUTION TO *JACK'S* PREDICAMENT IS IN *THIS CARD*-- THIS *EIGHT OF SPADES*...

...THE "*QUARREL*" CARD!

THEY'LL BE TOO BUSY FIGHTING EACH OTHER NOW TO GIVE *US* ANY TROUBLE, JACK!

JUST LIKE THE STUNT WE PULLED AGAINST THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE*! *

* WAY BACK IN *JLA* #43! --*EDITOR*.

GRAB THE LAST CANVAS AND WE'RE THROUGH, *TEN*!

NO! THEY'RE *MINE*!

THE JOKER--?!

I HEARD YOU WERE *KILLED* BY A *WHIRLPOOL* IN *STAR CITY!**

TUSH-TUSH! REPORTS OF MY DEATH WERE GREATLY *EXAGGERATED*...

*AS REPORTED LAST ISSUE! --*EDITOR.*

...WHICH IS EXACTLY HOW I *PLANNED* IT!

HA HA HA!

:OOF!:

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

GOT THE PAINTINGS!

RRREEEEEE!

POLICE SILENS! QUICK, EVERYONE-- *RETREAT!*

THERE'S MY CUE TO MAKE LIKE A BANANA-- AND *SPLIT!* HA HA HA!

YOU CACKLING, WHITE-FACED, WITLESS *BUFFOON*...

...*NO ONE* MAKES FOOLS OF THE *ROYAL FLUSH GANG!*

DROP 'EM, JOKER!

KLONK!

CORRECTION, OFFICER-- 'TIS *YOU* WHO SHALL *DROP!*

MINUTES LATER...

I'M GONNA KNOCK THOSE COSTUMED CARDS SILLY!

OH, YEAH? YOU AND WHAT ARMY?

CEASE AND DESIST, BABBOONS!

NO USE! THEY'RE HAVING TOO MUCH FUN SWATTING ONE ANOTHER TO OBEY ORDERS!

IF IT'S FUN THEY WANT, IT'S FUN THEY SHALL HAVE!

IN FACT... IT'LL BE A GAS!

HA HA HA!

SSSSTT!

UNNNNH!

WHAT'S THIS? THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE SPRAYING HIS OWN GANG WITH KNOCKOUT GAS? ODD BEHAVIOR, EVEN FOR A MADMAN...

...BUT THERE'S METHOD TO THIS MADNESS! FOR IN THE NEXT TEN SECONDS...

THEY SAY THE BATMAN USES A SECRET IDENTITY!

SMALL WONDER! IT'S RATHER FUN BEING TWO PEOPLE-- IN MY CASE, THE JOKER, AND--

--ARTHUR WILDE?

YES, OFFICER! THE WOULD-BE THIEVES ABSCONDED -- BUT WITHOUT THE PAINTINGS, AS YOU SEE!

LATER, AT THE STATION HOUSE--

--AND AFTER THE EXHIBIT, SHERIFF, I'LL BE LIVING IN WILDEWOOD --

--IN A HOUSE I'VE JUST PURCHASED!

BY THE WAY--MAY I SEE THE PRISONERS?

WHAT FOR? THEY WON'T TALK TO US!

BUT MAYBE THEY'LL SING TO ME!

WHY'D YOU *GAS* US, *JOKE*--

IX-NAY! YOU'LL BLOW MY COVER!

I WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO BE RESPECTABLE FOR MY *HOME TOWN!*

YOUR... *WHAAATT?!*

OOPS!

SIGH! WELL, NOW YOU KNOW! SO I MAY AS WELL TELL YOU THE *REST*...

"I REALLY *AM* ARTHUR WILDE! I WAS ONLY FIVE WHEN GREAT-GRANDDAD THADDEUS DIED--BUT I REMEMBER THE OLD COOT *WELL*..."

WANNA SEE MY NEW TURTLE?

"OLD GRAMPS HAD A LOUSY TEMPER..."

I TOLD YOU A *MILLION TIMES* --DON'T BOTHER ME WHEN I AM WORKING!

ZAP!

"...BUT I WAS FAR FROM OVERJOYED MYSELF-- ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OLD MAN'S *EXPERIMENTAL PAINT* PERMANENTLY *DISCOLORED* MY *SKIN!*"

HOW *GHASTLY!* WE MUSTN'T LET ANYONE SEE YOU LIKE *THIS!*

"I WAS PACKED OFF TO SCHOOL IN *SWITZERLAND* SHORTLY BEFORE THADDEUS DIED!"

I *STOLE** THOSE PAINTINGS TO HUMILIATE THE TOWN THAT EXILED ME!

IT'S MY PERSONAL *VENDETTA* AGAINST THIS LOATHSOME PLACE!

*IN CASE YOU MISSED THAT, WE REPEAT: THE *JOKER* SAID *STOLE*--IN THE *PAST* TENSE!--*EDITOR.*

NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO GET EVEN WITH THOSE CARDSHARPS!

WHEN I POUNCED ON THAT *ACE OF SPADES*, I SLIPPED A *BUG* ONTO HIM! LISTEN...

ACE, WE GOT *TROUBLE*...

...AND THE TROUBLE IS *YOU!*

YEAH! EVER SINCE *YOU* TOOK OVER OUR GANG, WE'VE HAD NOTHING *BUT* TROUBLE!

THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG WAS DOING *FINE...*

...TILL YOU CHANGED OUR COSTUMES, GOT US TO USE THOSE FLYING SCOOTERS, AND CREATED NEW WEAPONS!

...THEY'VE DONE NOTHING BUT GET IN OUR WAY!

WE HAD OUR HANDS SO FULL OF YOUR COMPLICATED *GADGETS*, WE COULDN'T EVEN *ZAP* THE *JOKER* WITH A *CARD!*

THE ABILITY TO INDUCE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES WITH THOSE CARDS IS *MEANINGLESS* UNLESS YOU WIELD THEM *RUTHLESSLY!*

I REDESIGNED YOUR ORIGINAL *CLUB* COSTUMES AFTER *SPADES* BECAUSE SPADES ARE SYMBOLIC OF *TREACHERY!*

AND *TONIGHT*-- WHEN WE STEAL THOSE PAINTINGS --WE'RE GOING TO BE *TREACHEROUS!*

FOR AS SURE AS I'M THE *ACE OF SPADES*--THE *DEATH CARD*--WHOEVER IS IN OUR WAY...

KRUNCH

...WILL END UP LIKE *THIS...*

...ON THE *GARBAGE* HEAP!

...ON THE *GARBAGE* HEAP!

TONIGHT, EH? OHH...WON'T *THEY* BE SURPRISED?

BIG DEAL! WHAT *I* WANNA KNOW IS WHEN DO YOU SPRING *US* OUTA HERE?

NOT SO *FAST!* NOW THAT I'VE ESTABLISHED MYSELF AS A PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY...

...I CAN'T LET *ANY-THING*-- *ANYONE*-- *CORRUPT* ME!

HA HA HA!

IMAGINE US *TRUSTING* A *LOONY* LIKE HIM!

LISTEN...HE MAY BE *INSANE*--

--BUT HE'S NOT *CRAZY!*

WE TURN NOW TO THE *LIBRARY* IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...

THAT TAKES CARE OF THE GUARDS! NOW LET'S MOVE *IN!*

ZAP!

AH...THEY'RE HERE-- THE *OPUS* SERIES!

NOW, NOTHING STANDS BETWEEN US AND THE *WILDE FORTUNE!*

--FORTUNE--?

YES! THADDEUS WILDE WAS AN ECCENTRIC GENIUS --AND A *MULTI-MILLION-AIRE!* HE DISINHERITED HIS HEIRS...THOUGHT THEY DIDN'T *DESERVE* HIS FORTUNE!

SO HE *HID* HIS MONEY SOMEWHERE...

"...AND ON HIS DEATHBED, PROCLAIMED..."

ANYONE *INTELLIGENT* ENOUGH TO FIND MY CLUES TO THE MONEY'S HIDING-PLACE...

...IS SMART ENOUGH TO POSSESS MY MONEY... AND USE IT WISELY...

I'M CERTAIN THE CLUES ARE IN THESE FOUR PAINTINGS!

PUT *TOGETHER...*

...THEY'LL REVEAL THE MONEY'S LOCATION IN SOME KIND OF *CODE!*

NOW, IT'S TIME--

--TO PLAY MY *TRUMP CARD!*

PAINTINGS DESTRUCT!

KLIK!

AND BEFORE THE *ACE OF SPADES* CAN TOUCH THE PAINTINGS...

SSSTT!

WHAT THE *DEUCE*--?! THE PAINTINGS ARE *DISINTEGRATING!*

...AND IN THEIR PLACE APPEAR FOUR...

...*JOKERS*?!

PRECISELY! *I'VE* GOT THE *REAL* PAINTINGS, YOU *PASTE-BOARD PATSIES!*

HA HA HA!

IT WAS SO *EASY!* I JUST TOOK FOUR *FOLD-AWAY* DUPLICATE-PAINTINGS FROM MY BOX OF NOVELTIES...

...AND *SWITCHED* THEM WITH THE *REAL* McCOYS!

"AS *ARTHUR WILDE*, IT WAS EASY FOR ME TO RETURN TO THE LIBRARY ROOF AND RETRIEVE THE CANVASES..."

...WHICH I HAD *HIDDEN* UNDER THE STAIRWELL!

"BUT IT WAS *TOO* EASY--*NO COMPETITION*...*NO* FUN!"

THE NEXT EVENING...

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THE *JOKER* RETURNED THE PAINTINGS TO THE EXHIBIT--

--AND CHALLENGED US TO *RE-STEAL* THEM BEFORE HE DOES!

IT'S ALL HERE IN THIS PAPER'S CLASSIFIED ADS--

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMEN

ARTS-LOVER SEEKS **GANG**: OBJECT-- CARD GAME IN **LIBRARY**. **FOUR** VOLUMES RECENTLY **RETURNED TO** CIRCULATION FOR **CHALLENGING** READING IF CARDS NOT FOR YOU.

UNSCRAMBLE THE BOLD WORDS AND YOU GET--"*CARD GANG: FOUR ARTS RETURNED TO LIBRARY, CHALLENGING YOU!*"

PRESENTLY...

GUARD

THE ROYAL FLUSHERS AGAIN!

THIS TIME WE'RE READY FOR YOU!

READY, PERHAPS--BUT YOU'RE CERTAINLY NOT FAST ENOUGH FOR US!

J-JAMMING MY GUN BARREL--?!

CHOK!

WHILE ELSEWHERE, IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE LIBRARY...

HEY, PAL-- GOT A LIGHT?

SURE!

HEY-- YOUR HAND!

IT... IT'S... DEAD WHITE!

YAAAHH!

HA-HA-HA-HA!

WHOOOSH!

AHH! YOU ANSWERED MY "INVITATION"! DELIGHTFUL!

WE'LL SEE HOW DELIGHTED YOU'LL BE TO DRAW A NINE OF SPADES--THE CARD FOR SUFFERING!

OHH--MY BODY... FEELS LIKE IT'S ON FIRE!

NOW TO *HAND* THIS LAUGHING LUNATIC SOMETHING TO *CRY* ABOUT!

THE ONLY CRYING *I'LL* DO... IS FOR *JOY!*

UNNH!

YOUR POWER-OF-SUGGESTION CARD-TRICKS ARE *WASTED* ON *THE JOKER!*

PEANUT B...

THEY'RE DESIGNED TO WORK ON PSYCHOLOGICALLY-*NORMAL* HUMANS...

...WHICH DISQUALIFIES *MAD* LITTLE *ME!*

HA HA HA HA HA

PEANUT BUTTER

THOUGHT YOU *BESTED* ME, EH, *ACEY?* WELL, THE "*CHOKE*" IS ON YOU! *HO HO HO!*

BUT EVERY "*CHOKE*" CAN BACKFIRE--AS YOU'LL LEARN ONCE I *FIT* MY HANDS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECK!

SPEAKING OF "*FIT*"-- THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU *ARE*--

--*FIT TO BE TIED!*

HA HA HA!

AND WHILE YOU FATUOUS FUGITIVES FROM A EUCHRE DECK ARE TRYING TO FIGURE WHICH LOOSE END IS UP...

...I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU WHAT YOU MISSED OUT ON!

QUICKLY, THE JOKER REARRANGES THE PAINTINGS ON THE WALL, AND...

UNSCRUPULOUS ART DEALERS OFTEN CUT CANVASES INTO *QUARTERS*--TO MAKE A FOUR-TIMES-GREATER PROFIT ON A SALE!

THEY DID IT TO THE *GREATEST*-- AND SO... *VOILÀ! "THE LAUGHING MAN"!..*

...THE "LOST" CANVAS OF THADDEUS WILDE! IT'LL MAKE A FINE *TROPHY* FOR MY *HA-HACIENDA!*

OH--BY THE WAY, *ROYAL FLUSHERS*-- YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT WILDE'S MONEY! I ALREADY *BROKE* THE CODE!

THE MONEY WAS BURIED UNDER THE *HOUSE* I BOUGHT... AND I'VE *REMOVED* IT!

RRREEEEE-

IT'S THE *FUZZ!* TOO BAD--I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE THE CANVASES BEHIND!

AND WHILE IT IS *THE JOKER* WHO LEAVES THE SCENE OF THE *CRIME*...

...IT IS "*ARTHUR WILDE*" WHO DEPARTS THE *LIBRARY*...

:SNICKER!:

LIBRARY

MINUTES LATER, WHILE THE *POLICE* ARE ROUNDING UP THE *ROYAL FLUSH GANG*...

WHAT'S SO FUNNY, *JOKER*? YOU LOST THE PAINTINGS! YOU *CAME* IN EMPTY-HANDED AND YOU'RE *LEAVING* EMPTY-HANDED!

SOME REVENGE ON YOUR *HOME-TOWN!*

HA HA HA!

MY FINE FELONIOUS FOOLS--YOU DIDN'T REALLY *BELIEVE* THAT *TALL TALE* ABOUT MY BEING *ARTHUR WILDE*?

REMEMBER THE NIGHT WATCHMAN... THE ONE NAMED *ART*--?

...*HE* WAS THE *REAL* ARTHUR WILDE-- AN ECCENTRIC WHO KEPT ALL HIS BELONGINGS IN THAT WAREHOUSE--

--INCLUDING HIS FABULOUS COLLECTION OF *GAG-NOVELTIES!*

BUT I WAS *REALLY* AFTER A *DIARY* IN THAT BOX...

...*THADDEUS WILDE'S DIARY*--THAT GAVE THE KEY TO THE MONEY-CODE! AND WE *DO* HAVE THE MONEY --*RIGHT*?

ONE OF THESE DAYS, *JOKER*, THE LAST LAUGH'S GONNA BE ON *YOU!* NEXT TIME THEY CATCH YOU, YOU WON'T GET AWAY!

PERHAPS THEY'LL GO *EASY* ON ME--

--AFTER ALL, I HELPED BRING THE *ROYAL FLUSH GANG* TO *JUSTICE!*

POLICE

HAHAHA

THE END

THE Joker

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

Featuring: "SHERLOCK STALKS THE JOKER!"

25¢ NO. 6 APR. 32443

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

THE JOKER

AHA! YOU'RE MY PRISONER AT LAST!

CLICK!

CLICK!

WHO HAS TRAPPED WHOM IN THIS BATTLE BETWEEN THE MASTER SLEUTH AND THE CLOWN OF CRIME?

THE WORLD'S MOST VIVACIOUS BUT MOST VICIOUS VILLAIN...

THE JOKER

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME BEING STALKED BY SHERLOCK HOLMES? IMPOSSIBLE, YOU SAY? DON'T BET ON IT-- YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE IT HAPPEN!

THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE BIZARRE... THE PURSUIT ABSURD-- THE WHOLE THING AS ZANY AS LIFE ITSELF... AND AS GRIM! FOR BENEATH THE ANTICS IS AS DEADLY AN ADVENTURE AS ANY THAT INVOLVED THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE, WHEN...

SHERLOCK stalks THE Joker!

STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL

ART BY: IRV NOVICK and TEX BLAISDELL

EDITED BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE MASTER OF MYSTERY--SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE!

A THEATER IN A MEDIUM-SIZE TOWN SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES FROM GOTHAM CITY...

CLIVE SICERSON IN "SHERLOCK HOLMES"

...WHERE THE TOURING COMPANY OF A CERTAIN RENOWNED MELODRAMA IS REHEARSING --

--AND HOLDING CENTER-STAGE--CLIVE SIGERSON, PLAYING THE GREATEST FICTIONAL DETECTIVE OF THEM ALL --

SHERLOCK HOLMES!

AH, MY OLD NEMESIS--PROFESSOR MORIARTY!

YOUR PISTOL WILL DO YOU NO GOOD--

ACT II

YOU SURE, SHERL, OL' SLEUTH?

OUTRAGEOUS!

BANG!

HOW DARE YOU DEPART FROM THE SCRIPT?

OH, I DUNNO... I THOUGHT I'D PUNCH IT UP--

--GET IT?

SOK!

UNNGH!

YOU'RE A DETECTING DUD, SHER! DIDN'T YOU DEDUCE THAT BENEATH MY GREASEPAINT WAS A MASK--

--AND BENEATH THE MASK...A JOKER!

MORIARTY IS THE JOKER...?!

AH! HERE COME THE INEVITABLE WOULD-BE HEROES!

TALKS BIG--

--FOR A GUY WHO'S HEADIN' FOR JAIL!

THE JOKER IS MORIARTY...?

GIVE 'EM THE HOOK, GANG!

...OR MORIARTY IS--THE JOKER!?!

"BLUE EYES", "SOUTHPAW"--COSH THE FOOLISH FELLOWS!

CONSIDER 'EM COSHED, BOSS!

OHO! HAPLESS HOLMES RE-ENTERS THE SCENE!

BEFORE YOU DO ME THE GRAVE BODILY HARM YOU DOUBTLESS INTEND, MAY I ASK--

--IS THIS YOURS?

UH... YES!

BOK!

HA HA HA HA HA HA

WELL, DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD!

EXIT STAGE RIGHT, FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS!

TOO BAD THIS SUPERB SCENE IS PLAYED TO AN EMPTY HOUSE!

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS...

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

YOU SAY YOU'RE THE MANAGER, SIR?

OKAY, WHAT WAS STOLEN?

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

HOW UPSETTING--

--THAT SUCH A TERRIBLE THING SHOULD HAPPEN IN MY THEATER... THE BOHEMIA!--

--SCANDALOUS!

PRECISELY, MY DEAR CHAP--

PD

--A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA...ONE OF THE FEW CASES IN WHICH I FAILED!*

HOWEVER, I SHALL NOT FAIL IN THIS EFFORT!

OBSERVE THE MANTLEPIECE!

--EMPTY! AS YOU PERCEIVE, SOMETHING WAS STOLEN...THE FRAMED PICTURE OF FRAN CARFAX--

--AN ACTRESS WHO PORTRAYS THE WOMAN IN THE PLAY... IRENE ADLER!

* NOTE: THIS AND SUBSEQUENT REFERENCES TAKEN FROM THE WRITINGS OF HOLMES' CREATOR--SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE!

THE GAME IS AFOOT!

HE'S TALKIN' CRAZY... ISN'T HE?

YES! APPARENTLY THOSE KNOCKS ON THE HEAD HAVE DERANGED HIM!

CLIVE SIGERSON ACTUALLY BELIEVES HE'S ...SHERLOCK HOLMES!

HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S IN CONDITION TO GO WANDERING AROUND ALONE!

HE ISN'T!

YOU... STAGEHAND! FOLLOW HIM!

OUTSIDE...

WAIT UP! I'M S'POSED TO WATCHDOG YOU!

MY NAME IS--

--INDEED...

...I'VE HEARD YOU CALLED WATSON!

FROM YOUR ROLLING WALK AND ROPE-SCARRED FINGERS, I PERCEIVE YOU WERE A SAILOR!

I USED TO WORK ON THE DOCKS! IN FACT, MY NICKNAME IS...

ELEMENTARY! YOU'RE..."DOCK" WATSON!

MEANWHILE, AT THE JOKER'S LAIR... THE HA-HACIENDA--

LIKE, THE LAST CAPER WAS INTERESTING, BUT WHAT'S THE POINT, JOKER?

THIS PHOTO ISN'T EXACTLY THE KEY TO THE MINT!

YOU MAY BE MY LEFT-HAND MAN, SOUTH-PAW--

--BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND MY SOUL!

I HAVE A BURNING NEED TO HUMILIATE, HARASS, HUMBLE AND PUT EGG ON THE FACE OF ALL DETECTIVES!

ALAS, SHERLOCK HOLMES IS BEYOND MY REACH... FOR THE VERY REEKY REASON THAT HE ISN'T REAL... AND I AM!

STILL I LONG TO LAY HIM LOW! THERE-FORE, I SHALL RECREATE HIS CASES--

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

--ONLY IN MY VERSION, THE CRIMINAL WILL WIN!

I CAN DIG IT!

HAND ME MY COMPLETE SHERLOCK HOLMES!

I SHALL MAKE CRIME TRIUMPHANT!

AH-HA!

THIS ADVENTURE SHOULD BE FUN!

THE COMPLETE SHERLOCK HOLMES BY A. Conan Doyle

EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AT THE RED CIRCLE GOLF COURSE...

WE MUST HURRY, WATSON!

SPEED IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO AVERT A TRAGEDY!

YOU WANNA RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN, SHERLOCK?

YOU DISAPPOINT ME! CAN'T YOU SENSE THE LURKING DANGER?

NO MATTER! I SPY OUR OBJECTIVE AHEAD!

YOU, SIR! ARE YOU NOT J.B. ("RED") WILSON?--PRESIDENT OF THE NEWLY-FORMED AIR HOCKEY LEAGUE?

YOU GOT ME PEGGED, FELLA!

NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND-- I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A TRICKY SHOT!

I GOT TO BIFF THE BALL PAST THE *WATER HAZARD* TO--

THE *WATER HAZARD!* *INDUBITABLY!*

IT IS *THERE* THE PERIL LIES--FOR THE VILLAINS COULD HIDE NO *OTHER* PLACE!

YOU *SEE,* WATSON?

SUBMERGED *DIVERS* SURFACING--!

QUICKLY, WATSON! WE MUST *SUBDUE* THEM!

CHECK THE *ACTION,* TOOTH!

YEAH, WELL... THE BOSS *SAID* WE SHOULD HANDLE ANYBODY WHO MIGHT *INTERFERE!*

I *WARN* YOU... I HAVE SOME SMALL SKILL IN *BOXING!*

YEAH? WELL... WITH *THAT* STANCE, I'LL BET YOUR SKILLS ARE *VERY* SMALL!

HA! A *CLUMSY* ATTEMPT!

OBVIOUSLY YOU ARE *UNTRAINED--*

--A COMMON *THUG!*

WHO YOU CALLIN' COM--

MMMPF!

ANOTHER DEFT *LEFT* TO *DISORIENT* YOU --

--AND A TERRIFIC *RIGHT UPPERCUT* TO PUT YOU TO *REST!*

I *DO* ENJOY A BIT OF EXERCISE!

I CAN KINDA GET NEXT TO A BRAWL *MYSELF!*

EXCELLENT WORK, MY DEAR CHAP!

BUT WE MUST NOT *CONGRATULATE* OURSELVES--FOR THE *MASTERMIND* IS STILL AT LARGE!

YOU MEAN-- *ME?*

FORE!

UNNGH!

KLUNK!

THE GOOD WATSON--

--FELLED BY A *DASTARDLY* ATTACK!

THUS IT BECOMES MY TASK--

--TO SUBDUE THE NAPOLEON OF CRIME ALONE!

MAY I BORROW YOUR FOUR-IRON, WILSON?

SURE! HEY, THIS IS THE DARNDEST THING!

SURRENDER-- OR PREPARE TO DUEL!

I CHOOSE THE DUEL!

THEN... EN GARDE!

I SHOULD WARN YOU-- I HAVE SOME SMALL SKILL AS A FENCER!

AS YOU PERCEIVE... I MADE NO IDLE BOAST!

YOU ARE EASILY DISARMED!

...DARNDEST THING...

SAVE US BOTH THE INDIGNITY OF AN UNSEEMLY CHASE AND THROW YOURSELF ON MY MERCY!

I WON'T RUN FAR-- PROMISE--

--JUST AS FAR AS MY BAG!

SURELY YOU DON'T THINK THAT WILL SAVE YOU ?

TRUTH IS, SHER, OL' SLEUTH-- SOMETHING IS FISHY ABOUT YOU --

--SO I'M GOING TO NET YOU!

A FOUL TRICK!

...DARNDEST...

WHO COULD HAVE FORESEEN SUCH A DIABOLICALLY CLEVER TRAP ?

WILSON... FLEE-- AS YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE!

UH... WHY?

I'M ENJOYING THIS DARN THING!

YOU ARE THE PRESIDENT-- THE HEAD-- OF THE AIR HOCKEY LEAGUE... AND YOUR NICKNAME IS "RED"!!

THEREFORE... THE A.H.L. IS A RED-HEADED LEAGUE!

WHY, THAT'S A SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY--"THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!"

I READ IT WHEN I WAS A KID!

AH! OUR FAILURE IS NOT *TOTAL!*

WE HAVE NOT PUT THE CRIMINALS BEHIND *BARS*--BUT WE *HAVE* FRIGHTENED THEM OFF!

I *REJOICE* WE *RESCUED* YOU, SIR!

THANKS... I *GUESS!*

COME, WATSON! THE GAME IS *STILL* AFOOT--FOR I KNOW WHERE THE MASTER OF VILLAINY WILL STRIKE *NEXT!*

HOW--?

ONE FACT I HAVE DEDUCED...ONE *INCONTROVERTIBLE* FACT!

REASON IT OUT FOR *YOURSELF!* YOU KNOW MY METHODS, WATSON!

I... DO??

AT THAT MOMENT, THE JOKER'S MOBILE HO-HOME IS SPEEDING TOWARD THE HA-HACIENDA...

TELL US, BOSS--

--WAS THE CAPER A *SUCCESS?*

I GOT WHAT *I* WANTED... THIS *FLAG* FROM THE *FOURTH GREEN--*

--"*THE SIGN OF THE FOUR*"... THE TITLE OF AN EARLY *SHERLOCK HOLMES* NOVEL!

I HAVE NO *IDEA* WHAT THE ACTOR AND THE STAGEHAND WERE DOING...

...BUT I'M *GLAD* THEY WERE THERE! I *LIKE* COMPETITION!

ON TO THE WATERFRONT--

--AND OUR NEXT COUP!

AND AT THAT VERY LOCATION...

MENOMONEE FALLS

CHEEZ... I FEEL RIGHT AT HOME!

DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO GET TOO COMFORTABLE, MY DEAR WATSON!

DIRE DEEDS ARE A-DOING TONIGHT!

NOTICE A GALA ABOARD THE SHIP-- A PARTY IN HONOR OF BRUCE C. PARTINGTON!

AIN'T HE THE HAMBURGER KING?

EXCELLENT, DEAR CHAP! HOWEVER, YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE THAT PARTINGTON IS RETURNING FROM SWITZERLAND WITH THE PLANS FOR A NEW HAMBURGER RESTAURANT!

THUS, WE DEAL WITH "THE BRUCE PARTINGTON PLANS"--

--AND THIS IS THE TITLE GIVEN TO ONE OF MY MORE INSTRUCTIVE CASES!

HOLD IT! THIS HERE'S A PRIVATE PARTY!

YEAH? I'M GONNA SMACK YOU SO HARD THEY'LL FIND YOUR TEETH IN AUSTRALIA!

NO, WATSON! NO VIOLENCE!

WE SHALL RESORT TO CUNNING!

WE CAN CIRCLE TO THE DILAPIDATED *TUG-BOAT* AND ASCEND TO THE SHIP BY MEANS OF THE *MOORING LINES!*

IT'LL BE A HECK OF A *CLIMB!*

YOU *SURE* HE'S THERE?

HEE FALLS

INDEED! FOR I *KNOW* SOMETHING ABOUT HIM-- SOMETHING OBVIOUS ONLY TO *ME!*

STAND WATCH, WATSON, WHILE I INSERT MYSELF INTO *PERIL!*

*EVEN AS "SHERLOCK HOLMES"-- NÉE CLIVE SIGERSON--BEGINS TO STRUGGLE **UP** THE TARRED LINE, THE JOKER'S HENCHMAN, **TOOTH**, IS AT THE **TOP** AND TOSSING...*

MENO

--A SMOKE-BOMB INTO THE MIDST OF THE PARTYERS ON THE DECK OF THE VESSEL...

EEEEK!

I DID IT, JOKER!

THESE RICH TYPES WILL BE SO BUSY CHOKING, THEY WON'T--

--WON'T WHAT, BLACKGUARD?

Y-YOU'RE NOT THE JOKER--!

I AM MISTER SHERLOCK HOLMES--

--AT YOUR SERVICE...

...AND YOUR DOWNFALL!

SPLASH!

I WARN YOU! I HAVE SOME SMALL SKILL AT--

--WATER POLO!

SMAK!

A HAND, WATSON! MOVE SMARTLY!

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVIN' A REAL MARSHMALLOW ROAST ABOARD THAT TUB!

SOMETHING THIS FOOTPAD SAID LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THE SMOKE IS BUT A DECOY!

THE REAL VILLAINY LIES ELSEWHERE!

BUT WHERE?

I CONFESS EVEN MY COGNITIVE POWERS ARE SORELY TAXED!

FUNNY NAME FOR A TUGBOAT, AIN'T IT!

THE BASKERVILLES

WHAT--?!

SPLENDID, WATSON! I UNDERESTIMATED YOU!

YOU'VE PROVIDED ME WITH THE VITAL CLUE!

THE BASKERVILLES

YES--FOR AT THAT INSTANT...

TREACHERY IS BENEATH OUR VERY FEET... ON THE BASKERVILLES!

JOKER-- YOU'RE CUTTIN' A HUNK OF STEEL!

IT'LL BRING MAYBE SEVENTY CENTS AS SCRAP!

YOUR CHIEF FAULT, AMONG OTHERS, SOUTHPAW, IS THAT YOU LACK AN ARTIST'S SOUL!

THIS IS NO ORDINARY "HUNK OF STEEL"!

SAILORS USE THESE FOR WHAT THEY CALL "DOGGING DOWN THE HATCHES"! ERGO, IT IS A "DOG"--

--AND A DOG IS A *HOUND*--

--AND THE BOAT WE'RE ON IS THE *BASKERVILLES!*

I HOLD A "*HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES,*" WHICH IS THE TITLE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES' *GREATEST* ADVENTURE!

A LINE OF REASONING WORTHY OF *ME*--!

THE *ACTOR*--!

NOT *I!* AND I THOUGHT MYSELF FAMILIAR TO *ALL* CROOKS!

THE WAY HE KEEPS *SHOWIN' UP*... I'M BEGINNIN' TO *BELIEVE* HE REALLY *IS* SHERLOCK HOLMES!

FUNNY THING IS... ME, *TOO!*

BUT HOW *CAN* HE BE?

ELEMENTARY! WHERE THERE IS *EVIL*, IT IS NATURE'S PLEASURE TO PROVIDE A COUNTER-BALANCING *GOOD!*

...AND IN THIS *SINGULAR* DRAMA, NATURE HAS PROVIDED *ME!*

PISH AND TOSH!

YOU'RE NOT SHERLOCK HOLMES. NOT...NOT...NOT!

YOU'RE JUST AN ACTOR!

AS ARE WE ALL, IN THE PLAY OF LIFE!

DESTINY HAS DECREED YOUR DOWNFALL... AIDED BY ME-- WHOEVER I AM!

RUNNING IS FUTILE!

OH, STICK THE FANCY TALK IN YOUR NOSE!

REACHING THE TUG'S MAINDECK, THE JOKER STARES AROUND WILDLY FOR AN EXIT... SPOTS A GARBAGE SCOW MOORED NEARBY--

--AND REALIZING HE CAN SKIP FROM THE SCOW TO SAFETY ON THE DOCK... JUMPS--!

HE'S GETTIN' AWAY--CLEAN!

ON THE CONTRARY, DEAR CHAP!

I KNOW SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT HIM!

KINDLY TWIST THE VALVE, WATSON--AND ACTIVATE THIS HIGH-PRESSURE WATER-GUN!

IT'S ON!

RECALL, IF YOU WILL...

PROFESSOR MORIARTY PERISHED BY WATER...AT REICHENBACH FALLS!

WE HAVE HERE A PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF WATER--

--AND OBSERVE THAT OUR QUARRY IS...FALLING!

A SATISFACTORY NIGHT'S WORK, EH, WATSON?

YEAH...BUT YOU BEEN SAYIN' YOU KNOW SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT HIM...

...THAT PUT YOU ON HIS TRAIL!

IT'S SIMPLY THAT WHETHER I AM SHERLOCK HOLMES OR CLIVE SIGERSON..

--THE JOKER IS PROFESSOR MORIARTY!

AND HOLMES CAN ALWAYS DEDUCE WHERE MORIARTY WILL STRIKE!

A SIMPLE CASE OF IDENTITY, WATSON!

END

THE JOKER
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
CO-STARRING LEX LUTHOR
30¢
NO. 7
JUNE
32443

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

LUTHOR HAS STOLEN MY MADNESS--

--MY SENSE OF HUMOR--

HAHAHAHAHA

HAHAHA

--BUT THIS IS NO JOKE!

ERNIE CHUA

THE JOKER

... AND THAT SINISTER GENIUS, *LEX LUTHOR*, APPEAR TO BE ENTWINED IN AN *INEXTRICABLE MESH!*

ODD--SUDDENLY I FEEL I'VE ACQUIRED THE *LOGIC* AND *SCIENTIFIC GENIUS* OF *LUTHOR!*

AND I SEEM TO HAVE ABRUPTLY ASSUMED *THE JOKER'S* PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF *HILARITY, MALEVOLENCE* AND *MADNESS!*

A *DIABOLICAL TRANSFORMATION* PROPELS THEM INTO A *MADCAP ESCAPADE...*

...WHICH, BEFORE THE DAY IS DONE, MAY LITERALLY CAUSE *THE JOKER* TO EXCLAIM...

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1

"LUTHOR... YOU'RE DRIVING ME SANE!"

IN A SUBURBAN THEATER, AN EXCLUSIVE NEWSREEL FEATURES THE WORLD'S MOST NOTORIOUS MASTERS OF CRIME! BUT THE CHILL WIND RACING THROUGH THIS FILM FORUM IS NOT FROM ITS AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM--IT IS THE *TERROR* STIRRED BY THE SHRILL CACKLE EMANATING FROM THE FIENDISH FIGURE APPEARING ON THE CELLULOID...

...NONE OTHER THAN THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME* HIMSELF!

HA-HA-HA HA-HA-HA-HA!

...AND AS THE CHERRY-PICKER DESCENDED, *THE JOKER* DARED OUR CAMERAMAN, *LARRY INGLES*, TO APPROACH HIM...

HA-HA-HA!

WANT TO GET A *REALLY GOOD* PICTURE, SHUTTERBUG?

NEVER ONE TO PASS UP A RARE CLOSE-UP OF A CRIMINAL CELEBRITY AT WORK, LARRY MOVED TOWARD HIM AND...

HERE'S *MUD* IN YOUR *LENS!* HAHAHA

THE CAMERAMAN DIDN'T CARE THAT HE AND HIS CAMERA WERE COVERED WITH PIE! FOR LIKE A GOOD REPORTER, HE GOT HIS STORY!

HA-HA HA

ALL WE CAN DETERMINE IS THAT AT THIS POINT, *THE JOKER* GRABBED THE CAMERA AND BEGAN TO *FILM* THE *CAMERAMAN*--

--AS A *CHEMICAL* FROM THE PIE-CREAM SEEPED THROUGH HIS SKIN, CAUSING HIM TO LAUGH HYSTERICALLY!

WE FOUND LARRY STILL GRINNING, EVEN IN DEATH, FROM *THE JOKER'S* LETHAL *LAUGHING TOXIN*...AND--

--BESIDE HIS BODY--THE VILLAIN'S DEADLY CALLING CARD!

BUT AS *THE JOKER'S* MANIACAL LAUGH ON FILM FADES OFF...

EITHER *THE JOKER'S* LAUGH IS CRAZIER AND MORE HAUNTING THAN I REMEMBER IT...

...OR IT'S NOT ALL ON THAT *FILM!*

SOMEBODY IN THE *THEATER* IS LAUGHING THE SAME WAY...

BUT NO ONE ELSE SEEMS TO NOTICE AS THE DOCUMENTARY QUICKLY SHIFTS TO...

...THE CRIMINAL PROBABLY THE *FURTHEST* FROM INSANITY, AND IN MANY WAYS MORE CUNNING THAN *THE JOKER*--*LEX LUTHOR*...

ZING!

BEEOW!

BEEOW

...NOW MAKING AN INGENIOUS ESCAPE FROM A *MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON*--

RATATATAT!

--*LEX LUTHOR*...POSSIBLY THE GREATEST CRIMINAL GENIUS OF ALL TIME!

=HMPH!= MORE CUNNING THAN *THE JOKER?*

WHO THE BLAZES IS THAT GUY'S PRESS AGENT ANYHOW?

WELL, AT LEAST I SAW *MYSELF* IN ACTION! HOW ELSE CAN I BRIGHTEN MY DAY?

=HUNH!=

HEY, OLD MAN! I'D RECOGNIZE THAT WALK IN *ANY* DISGUISE!

WHEN DID YOU BUST OUT OF THE *NUT-BIN, JOKER?*

LEX LUTHOR! FANCY MEETING YOU HERE--OR *ANYWHERE!*

HOW'S THE OLD HEAD, *LEXIE?*

MANAGER

DON'T CALL ME LEXIE...

...*MY MOTHER CALLED ME LEXIE!*

NO OFFENSE, BIG FELLA--WANNA TRY ON MY *WIG?*

OKAY, USHER-- I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

AS THE *MAD CLOWN* STEPS OUT OF THE THEATER WITH THE OPPRESSIVELY CLEAR-HEADED *LUTHOR*...

...SO THEN THE GUY THAT FELL FIFTEEN STORIES SAYS, "I DON'T KNOW--I JUST GOT HERE MYSELF!" HA, HA!

YOU SEE?... HE JUST GOT THERE... HE DOESN'T KNOW--

I DON'T GET IT!

YOU *DON'T*...? WELL, HERE'S ANOTHER *SHOWSTOPPER*...

A SCIENTIST IS TESTING A FROG! HE SAYS "JUMP" AND IT LEAPS 12 FEET!

BURGER BLAST

...SO THE DOCTOR WRITES DOWN, "WITH NO LEGS, THE FROG BECOMES *DEAF*--"

WHREEEEEEEEEE

HEY--THOSE SIRENS ARE GETTING AWFULLY CLOSE!

DO YOU THINK--

--SOMEONE COULD HAVE SPOTTED US AND CALLED THE FUZZ?

BURGER BLAST

SKREEEEEE

JUST IN CASE, *JOKER*--

--TAKE THIS *GADGET!*

HUH?

WHAT THE BLAZES IS *IT*--?

NO TIME TO EXPLAIN!

KITCHEN

WHEN THE COPS BREAK IN, JUST TWIST THE NOSE ON THE DEVICE!

ALL RIGHT, *MANIAC*--OFF WITH THE PHONY HAIR!

SURELY, YOU CAN'T MEAN *ME*...?

...NOT THAT I WAS TRYING TO *HIDE* FROM YOU FINE LAW-ENFORCERS--

--BUT *GREEN HAIR* CLASHES WITH MY HAMBURGER!

ZAP!

JOEY-- JUST *TOUCHED* HIM... AND HE'S BEING FLUNG OVER!

AND IN THE KITCHEN, WHERE TWO POLICEMEN HAVE RUSHED IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR...

ALL RIGHT, DON'T MOVE... *LUTHOR*--!

YOU MEAN *LUTHORS*! I DON'T KNOW *WHICH* OF THEM IS *REAL*--

--BUT HE'S NOT GOING TO FOOL *US* WITH HIS SCIENTIFIC ILLUSIONS!

YEAH...UP AGAINST THE WALL-- ALL THREE OF YOU!

BY THE TIME THOSE *HOLOGRAM LUTHORS* VANISH INTO THIN AIR...

...I'LL BE SUNNING MYSELF IN MY PENTHOUSE HIDE-OUT!

AND UP *FRONT*, WHILE *LUTHOR* ESCAPES OUT *BACK*...

WHAT A FINE DAY FOR A *JOG*...

...EXCEPT FOR THE PECULIAR *HAIL*!

WHEE! THESE MINIONS OF THE LAW FALL OFF ME LIKE *DANDRUFF!*

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

ZAP!

POW!

THIS IS MORE FUN THAN RACING THROUGH *FEDERAL COURT* ON A *SKATEBOARD!*

SUDDENLY, *THE JOKER'S* CACKLE STOPS SHORT AS--

WHUZZAT?-- NOBODY CAN *TOUCH ME!*

EXCEPT *ME, CLOWN!*

I SCRAPED SOME *PAINT CHIPS* OFF A WALL...

...AND MIXED THEM WITH SOME CHEMICAL ODDS-AND-ENDS IN THE KITCHEN TO PUT INTO THESE OLD SODA BOTTLES--

--AND MADE YOURSELF A CARBONATED *ROCKET ENGINE!*

LUTHOR, HAVE YOU TOLD *NASA* ABOUT THIS--?

ANYTIME THEY WANT TO PAY A CONSULTANT'S FEE--

--BUT IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

...I'VE GOT A BUSY SCHEDULE TODAY!

LUTHOR WOULDN'T BE A HALF-BAD BIRD...

...IF HE MANAGED TO GROW HIMSELF SOME KIND OF *SENSE OF HUMOR!*

WORK, WORK, WORK! RUSH, STEAL, KILL! THE MAN IS *DULL!*

STILL, I OWE *LUTHOR* A *FAVOR!* SO I'LL GET THE OLD STICK TO *LAUGH*--

--ONCE I FIND OUT WHERE HE'S RUNNING OFF TO!

THAT NIGHT, IN A LAVISH PENTHOUSE HIGH OVER THE CITY...

ATTENTION!-- ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO FOR OPERATION MINDBREAK, PHASE-TWO!

OUR TARGET FOR THIS RUN IS LOCATED IN COAST CITY--

LUTHOR'S GOT LOTS OF GADGETS TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM FINDING HIS HIDEAWAY--

--BUT HE DIDN'T THINK ANYONE WOULD BE OFF THE WALL--OR RATHER, ON THE WALL--ENOUGH TO CLIMB THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING AT NIGHT WITH SUCTION CUPS!

AND THE CRIMINAL GENIUS HAS A BIZARRE EAVESDROPPER AS HE BROADCASTS HIS PLAN FOR TOMORROW'S CAPER...

...THE MOMENT THE COUNTDOWN ENDS, THE WILD BEAM WILL CATCH GREEN LANTERN WHEREVER HE IS IN COAST CITY--

--AND HIS DOMINANT MENTAL CHARACTERISTIC --HIS WILL POWER-- WILL DRAIN INTO MY BODY!

CHECK, MR. LUTHOR!

AT THIS MOMENT, ASLEEP IN A HOTEL ROOM AS HE VISITS HIS HOME TOWN IS HAL JORDAN, EARTH'S GREEN LANTERN...

UNAWARE THAT HE IS A TARGET OF THE DREAD LUTHOR --IN DANGER OF LOSING THE POWER SOURCE THAT MAKES HIM WHAT HE IS!

BUT HAL JORDAN WILL SLEEP SOUNDLY BECAUSE AS LUTHOR'S COUNTDOWN DRONES ON, A NEWCOMER MAKES A TOTALLY IRRATIONAL MOVE...THE ACT OF A MADMAN!

FOUR... THREE--

HOLD--!

HEY! PUT THAT HELMET BACK--

HA HA HA HA HA

TWO-- ONE--

NO! DON'T--

FIRE!

ZUNG!

WH-WHAT *HAPPENED--?*

I DON'T KNOW! I JUST GOT HERE MYSELF! *HAH! HAH! HAH!*

THIS IS NO *LAUGHING* MATTER, *LUTHOR!*

EVIDENTLY YOUR *PERSONALITY SCRAMBLING GADGET* WAS SHORT-CIRCUITED INTO SWAPPING OUR PERSONALITY TRAITS...

...SO *YOU* HAVE *LUTHOR'S GENIUS*...

...AND *I* HAVE *THE JOKER'S MADNESS!*

--BECAUSE YOU'RE NOW A *GENIUS*...

...THE GREATEST THE WORLD HAS EVER *KNOWN!*

YES... BUT HOW DID *I* KNOW THAT--?

I...I *UNDERSTAND!* I UNDERSTAND *EVERYTHING*...

...I UNDERSTAND THE MUSIC OF *MOZART*-- THE ART OF *VAN GOGH*--THE THEORIES OF *EINSTEIN*...UNDERSTAND THEM *ALL AT ONCE*...

...AND THE RUSH OF ALL THIS GENIUS IS *DRIVING ME SANE!*

BUT BEFORE THE NEWLY-ORIENTED *JOKER* CAN ABSORB THE SHOCK OF WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED...

SO LONG, YOU BLITHERING GENIUS...

SO THERE STANDS *THE JOKER*-- ALONE AND NOT MERELY *SANE*, BUT POSSESSED OF REMARKABLE INTELLIGENCE!

...AND HAPPY LANDINGS GETTING OUT OF *LUTHOR'S LAIR!*

NOW *THE JOKER* IS SANE ENOUGH AND BRILLIANT ENOUGH...

...TO KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY *OUT* OF HERE...

...IS THE WAY HE CAME *IN*--

--AND THAT IT'S *NO FUN* AT ALL!

BUT EVEN SANE, THERE ARE SOME ADVANTAGES TO BEING *THE JOKER* ON NIGHT-LIT CITY STREETS...

I HAVEN'T GOT A CENT ON ME--BUT YOU'LL TAKE ME TO THE WAREHOUSE NEAR PIER 82.!

Y-YESSIR! *ANYTHING* YOU SAY, *M-MISTER J-JOKER!*

FOR SALE!

TAXI

CITY CAB

FRANK

THAT CABBIE'S LIKELY TO SET A RECORD GETTING TO A PHONE TO REPORT MY WHEREABOUTS...

WARE

...SO SCRATCH *THIS* HIDE-OUT FOR MY *WHEELS*---

--AND I'D BETTER BURN RUBBER TO MY *HA-HACIENDA!*

WAREHO

THERE'S LOTS I'VE GOT TO DO BEFORE THE *GANG* ASSEMBLES FOR THE *STRATEGY SESSION!*

DAWN IS BREAKING AS THE *CLOWN PRINCE* ENTERS A SECRET SOUND-PROOFED ROOM...

HA-HA HA-HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

ENTER

...ACTIVATES A SPECIAL LOCK SENSITIVE TO A CERTAIN DISTINCTIVE LAUGHTER...

AND IT OPENS INTO A COMBINATION HIDEAWAY, FUNHOUSE, AND MENTAL WARD--*THE JOKER'S HA-HACIENDA*...

THIS MOOD WILL NEVER DO! I DON'T FEEL *BOUNCY* AND *FEISTY!*

CAN'T LET THE *GANG* SEE ME IN THIS CONDITION!

GOT TO *FAKE* IT--

--LIKE THIS *SMILE!* THIS INSANE GRIN MAKES MY MOUTH FEEL LIKE *SILLY PUTTY!*

HOPE THIS EXTRA RED ON MY LIPS ACCENTS THE SMILE... MAKES ME LOOK CRAZIER--

--UH-OH! HERE THEY COME!

AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON, THE MEMBERS OF THE *MOUNTEBANK MALEFACTOR'S* MOB ARE PERMITTED TO ENTER *THE JOKER'S INNER SANCTUM*...

ENTER

EXIT

HEY, BOSS...

...HOW'S TRICKS?

TRICKS...?

AH, YES--

--SAME OLD TRICKS...

HA HA HA HA HA HA

...WITH A NEW *TWIST* OR TWO!

ALL RIGHT, GROUP--HEAR *THIS!*

YOU'RE ALL TO GIVE UP YOUR LIVES OF CRIME *IMMEDIATELY*...

...AND RUN FOR *OFFICE!* THERE'S MORE *MONEY* IN IT! *HA HA HA!*

SOUTHPAW--IF YOU GET UP SO I FALL OVER BACKWARDS, I'LL BREAK YOUR FACE...

...SO IT LOOKS...

ZAP

...LIKE *THIS!*

HA HAH HA

UH, BOSS ...WEREN'T WE GONNA GO OVER SOME *PLAN* FOR A *JOB*--?

HOW *DARE* YOU INTERRUPT A *MASTER SHOWMAN* AT WORK?

OUT--ALL OF YOU!

OUT, OUT, OUT!

COME BACK WHEN YOU DEVELOP SOME APPRECIATION FOR *ART*, PEASANTS!

WHEW! THE BOSS SURE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO REMIND US HE'S A *NUT CASE!*

AT LEAST HE PAYS WELL!

WHEW! TO THINK I HAVE TO GO THROUGH A NUMBER LIKE *THAT* EVERY TIME I GET THE *SAPS* TOGETHER!

WHAT AN *ACT* I PUT ON! BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT TO USE SOME OF THAT *GENIUS* I SWIPED FROM *LUTHOR!*

AND AS FOR *LEX LUTHOR*-- HE'S HAVING A VERY BUSY TIME...

I WAS ALWAYS SUCH A STICK-IN-THE-MUD, I NEVER SAW HOW MUCH *FUN* IT WAS TO TAKE FROM THE *RICH*...

BANK OF EN

...AND GIVE IT TO *EVERYONE!* *AH-HA-HA!*

...AND NOW *MUNICIPAL MUSEUM'S PRIDE*-- THE FABULOUS *GARGANTUA DIAMOND*...

WH-WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*

THE GEM'S *SHATTERED!*

MY NEW LONG-DISTANCE DIAMOND-CUTTING TECHNIQUE...

...STILL HAS A FEW BUGS IN IT...

...SO *SUE ME!* *HOO-HAH!*

AND SPEEDING THROUGH THE CITY FASTER AND MORE SKILLFULLY THAN ANY POLICE VEHICLE...

" AHH--HE'S *STOPPED!...*"

I NEVER REALIZED WHAT A *BOFFO* PLACE THIS TOWN REALLY WAS!

FROM NOW ON IT'S NO MORE GRAND SCHEMES FOR ME--

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

--I'LL JUST HAVE *FUN... FUN... FUN!*

THIS MENTALITY I'VE GOT NOW IS *WILD!*

I ACTUALLY RIGGED UP THIS TRACKING DEVICE WITH *LUTHOR'S* SCENT ON IT--

--HE SEEMS TO BE MOVING AROUND QUITE A BIT!

THROUGH REVOLVING DOORS, THE *CLOWN PRINCE* STREAKS...

THANKS TO MY *GENIUS*--

--I'VE CALCULATED THAT IF *LUTHOR* AND I REMAIN THE WAY WE ARE FOR A FULL *24 HOURS*...

ROOF

...THIS GIDGEY-GADGET I THREW TOGETHER WON'T REVERSE THE PROCESS--

--AND THE *DISPARITY* IN OUR SYSTEMS WILL SOON CAUSE BOTH *LUTHOR* AND *ME* TO *DIE* OF *EXHAUSTION*!

THIS SURE IS A NEAT COSTUME WITH ALL THESE GADGETS I INVENTED...BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE I COULD INVENT THEM *NOW*--OR *COULD* I?

I HEAR THERE IS A VERY THIN LINE BETWEEN *GENIUS* AND *INSANITY*--

EEEYAH!

LUTHOR--I'VE GOT A PROPOSITION FOR YOU!

NO.! NOW THAT I'VE GOT THE GIFT OF *LUNACY*, I WON'T LET YOU TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME!

LISTEN, YOU *BUFFOON!*

BUT THERE ARE NO SANE EARS NEARBY TO HEAR THE SOUND OF *THE JOKER* PLEADING FOR *SANITY*...

THE ONLY WAY TO CATCH UP WITH THAT NUT IS TO TAKE A CHANCE ON THE CONTENTS OF HIS BELT!

...AS A TRULY *MAD SCIENTIST* JETS OUT OVER THE CITY--

PILLS--!

I *THINK* I KNOW WHAT THESE DO--

--BUT IF I'M WRONG...

...MY LIFE WILL ONLY BE *ONE DAY SHORTER!*

YES--THE PILLS ARE WORKING... GIVING ME ABOUT *THIRTY SECONDS* OF SUPER-STRONG LEG MUSCLES!

ENOUGH TO *LEAP FASTER* THAN *LUTHOR'S* BOOT JETS ARE TAKING HIM...

...AND *GRAB*--

:URGPHHH!:

HA HA HA! HOW *DROLL!*

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN FUN, *CLOWN?*

HEY! GIMME BACK MY *JET-BOOT!*

NOW IF *I* WERE TO DESIGN A JET-BOOT, I'D PUT THE *OFF-ON* SWITCH WHERE IT COULD BE ACTIVATED BY THE *TOE...*

...RIGHT!

NOW TO FLIP THE SWITCH...

...SO I CAN RIDE IT LIKE A HOBBY-HORSE TO THIS ROOF, WHERE A STRUGGLE WILL BE LESS PRECARIOUS--

--WITH AN ANGRY, ONE-BOOTED *LUTHOR!*

IN MOMENTS, THE PAIR LANDS ON A TENEMENT ROOF...

YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE IN, *LUTHOR!* YOU'VE GOT TO GO BACK THE WAY YOU WERE--

--AND THE WAY *I* WAS!

DON'T TRY THAT ON ME... I'M ABOVE *REASON*--

-- I'M A *SUPER-CROOK!*

HE MIGHT NOT BE *ABOVE* REASON...

... BUT HE'S *BEYOND* IT--

--AND HEAVEN HELP ME, THAT'S THE WAY *I'VE* GOT TO BECOME AGAIN!

I DON'T WANT TO BE *SANE* AGAIN!

WHEN I WAS SANE, I DID EVERYTHING BECAUSE I *HATED SUPERMAN!*

NOW I DON'T *HATE* ANYONE!

:UNH: YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...

...YOU WERE *DRIVEN* BY YOUR *HATRED*--NOW YOU'LL BE *DRIVEN* BY YOUR *MADNESS!*

YOU'RE STILL IN THE *SAME HELL*--ONLY WITH *DIFFERENT SCENERY!*

ON THE OTHER HAND--

--I DON'T PARTICULARLY *LIKE* ANYONE VERY MUCH EITHER...

...INCLUDING YOU, *LEECH!*

COME ON, LISTEN TO *REASON!*

HAW! LISTEN TO THE *CLOWN* TALKING ABOUT *REASON!*

HEY--YOUR *WEIGHT* IS TOO MUCH FOR MY *JETS!*--*LET GO!*

THAT'S IT, *LUTHOR*--CUT YOUR JET-BOOT AND CALM DOWN!

I'M CALM ENOUGH TO BUST YOUR *CHALKY FACE* IN!

HA HA

NOW'S MY CHANCE TO SLIP THIS *ELECTRONIC HEADGEAR* ON *LUTHOR*--WHILE HE'S IN THIS HIGHLY IRRATIONAL STATE!

GOT TO--IF I EVER WANT TO REGAIN MY OWN PERSONALITY!

NOW WATCH *JOE MALONE*--A YOUNG MAN WITH A GOOD JOB...HE'S A CITY COP--

GROCERY

--WHO SMILES AT THE PEOPLE ON HIS BEAT AND SHOWS SOME MODEST PROMISE FOR PROMOTION...

OFFICER MALONE HAD FEW AMBITIONS OTHER THAN TO MAKE *CAPTAIN* BEFORE HE COLLECTED HIS PENSION--

--AND TO BUY A HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS WITH A POOL IN THE BACKYARD...

...WHATEVER HIS DAYDREAMS--THEY ARE SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED WHEN...

...IN THE ALLEYWAY...

THE MOMENT IS *NOW*--!

BUT A PROMOTION WILL COME FOR *JOE MALONE* SOONER THAN HE THOUGHT...

...BECAUSE TODAY, THROUGH VERY LITTLE EFFORT OF HIS OWN, HE WILL BECOME A *HERO*--

--THE FIRST POLICEMAN TO SINGLEHANDEDLY APPREHEND BOTH *LEX LUTHOR* AND *THE JOKER*...

...AND NEITHER HIS *LIFE* NOR HIS *CAREER* WILL EVER BE THE *SAME!*

AND AS EACH OF THE ARCH-VILLAINS RETURNS TO HIS RESPECTIVE HOUSE OF DETENTION -- *LUTHOR* TO PRISON...

I CAN BREAK OUT OF HERE WHENEVER I WANT-- SOMEHOW...

...BUT WHILE I WAS *MAD*, I HAD THE GLIMMER OF AN IDEA! A *THEORY* THAT I HAD TO BE *CRAZY* TO COME UP WITH...

MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

...THE *ULTIMATE THEORY*-- AN EXPLANATION FOR THE *UNIVERSE*! IT COULD MAKE ME *WORLD-RENOWNED* FOR ALL TIME--

--IF ONLY I WERE *INSANE* ENOUGH TO *REMEMBER* IT!

-- AND *THE JOKER* TO *ARKHAM ASYLUM* FOR THE *CRIMINALLY INSANE*...

ARKHAM HOSPITAL

HA HA HA HA HA HA

NOBODY BUT A *PSYCHIATRIST* SPENDS AS MUCH TIME AS I DO COMING AND GOING FROM *PADDED CELLS*...

HA HA HA HA HA

20741

...SO IT'S GOOD I HAD THE *FORESIGHT* TO SPEND SOME OF MY ILL-GOTTEN GAINS--

--TO CONVERT THIS PADDED CELL INTO AN *ELEVATOR*, WHICH DESCENDS--

--TO A SECRET *MINI-HA-HACIENDA* HERE *UNDERNEATH* MY HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME!

AH, *JOHNNY NEVADA'S* MONOLOGUE SHOULD BE STARTING ABOUT NOW!

LET'S SEE WHAT GAGS I CAN STEAL FROM HIM *TONIGHT*!

THE END

DC COMICS SALUTES THE BICENTENNIAL 7

THE JOKER

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

SPECIAL GUEST VILLAIN-- THE SCARECROW!

30¢ NO. 8 AUG. 32443

THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT FOR A MURDER! LET'S FIND A VICTIM!

AND THE VICTIM, JOKER--

--IS YOU!

ERNIE CHUA 1975

PRESENTING
THE CLOWN PRINCE of CRIME
THE JOKER
in a
SHOCK-FILLED
SHOWDOWN!

"THE SCARECROW'S FEARSOME FACE-OFF!"

DIE LAUGHING, SCARECROW!

HA-

HA

HA-

HA

HA

NO, JOKER-- IT'S YOU WHO WILL DIE--OF FRIGHT!

STORY: ELLIOT S! MAGGIN
ART: IRV NOVICK and TEX BLAISDELL
EDITING: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

S-2242

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE *METROPOLIS* A UNIQUE VEHICLE SPEEDS ALONG A LITTLE-USED ROAD...

HEY, *SOUTHPAW*--WHAT'S THE BOSS CALL THIS CRAZY HEAP?...THE *HO-HO-HOME ON WHEELS?*

YOU'VE GOT ONE "*HO*" TOO MANY THERE, *TOOTH*--BUT IT DON'T MUCH MATTER...

...CONSIDERIN' WHAT THE *SUPER-CLOWN* PAYS US TO WORK FOR HIM!

YEAH, HE--

:OOPS!:

LOSING MY *BALANCE...!*

CHEE, *SOUTHPAW!* THE WHOLE CAR'S RATTLIN' SO BAD--IT'S *KNOCKED* ME TO THE FLOOR! *WHAT'S GOIN' ON?*

DUNNO!! MUST BE AN *EARTHQUAKE--!*

WHILE UP FRONT IN THE CAB...

HA HA! I'VE *SHAKEN* UP THAT PAIR OF *LACKEYS* ENOUGH...

...TO PUT THE FEAR OF *FRIGHT* INTO THEIR HEARTS!

NOW LET'S SEE WHAT *THIS OUTFIT* WILL DO!

AND AS THE TERRIFIED THUGS CATCH THEIR BREATH ENOUGH TO REGAIN THEIR BALANCE...

IT--IT'S THE F-FREAKIN' *S-SCARECROW!*

H-HE'S M-MAKIN' US S-SCARED OF OUR OWN *SH-SHADOWS!*

CALM YOUR PATOOTIES, *SOUTHPAW!*

IF I CAN MAKE YOU *BELIEVE* I CAN CAUSE YOUR SKIN TO CRAWL WITH *FEAR--*

--LIKE *THE SCARECROW...* I CAN SCARE *ANYONE!*

FEAR'S ALMOST AS GOOD AS *LAUGHS*--WHICH IS HOW OUR NEXT CAPER GOES! LISTEN...

THAT VERY NIGHT, AT *STAR LABORATORIES*..

KEEP AN EYE OUT, BOYS! THE *SCARECROW* BROKE JAIL TONIGHT--

STAR LABORATOR
SHOW I.D. TO GUARD ON ENTRY

WE READ THE PAPERS, TOO, ANDY!

THIS PLACE WOULD BE RIGHT UP *THAT CROOK'S* ALLEY!

YEAH, WE'D BE THE LOGICAL SPOT FOR *THE SCARECROW* TO BOWL OVER!

TIM--?

HEE-HEE... *HO! HO! HO!*

TIM... WHAT'S SO--

--SO... HEH-HEH.. *FUNNY?*

HAH! HAH! HO! HO!

DON'T KNOW, JONNY... *HO! HO!* BUT I'M *HA...*

...LAUGHING MY *HAH-HAH GUTS* OUT--!

AND WITHIN MINUTES...

JONNY?... TIM? WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE--?

SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING *SPOOKY* COMING OFF...!

NOW--FOR MY "*SKELETON*" *KEY*...

...WHICH CAN OPEN *ANY* DOOR... *HA HA HA!*

INSIDE THE HIGH SECURITY BUILDING...

WHERE ARE YOU MEN RUNNING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

TROUBLE AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE, DR. FARR! COULD BE *BIG TROUBLE!*

DR. FARR

TH-TH-THE S-S-SCARE-CROW!

SOMETHIN' FUNNY'S HAPPENIN' TO MY HEAD...

...STARTIN' TO FEEL--AFRAID!

:GASP!:

HE'S DOIN' IT TO US--WITH A CHEMICAL OR SOMETHING!

I WANT OUT O' HERE!

TELL ME, GOOD DOCTOR--WHERE MIGHT I FIND A TANK OF THIS FEAR-INDUCING GAS THAT'S REPUTED TO BE BETTER THAN MINE?

AS THE TERRIFIED SCIENTIST DIRECTS HIS COSTUMED ASSAILANT TO STAR LABS' LATEST DISCOVERY...

:GAHH: THE SCARECROW...

...THE VILLAIN WHO CAN CAUSE CHEMICAL FEAR IN ANYONE NEAR HIM!

I'LL TAKE THAT CHEAP IMITATION FEAR-GAS, GENTLEMEN!

NOW FACE THE WALL AND COVER YOUR EYES, PLEASE! NO PEEKING!

I THINK IT WOULD BE WISE TO DEPART... BEFORE SUPERMAN SHOWS UP!

KA-RAASH!

HA-HAHAHA!

GOOD GOSH...THAT WASN'T THE SCARECROW!

THE JOKER PSYCHED US OUT--MADE US REACT THE WAY WE EXPECTED TO REACT TO THE SCARECROW!

JOKER

WITHIN THE HOUR, A BLACK-AS-NIGHT RAVEN FLIES OVER A S.T.A.R. LABORATORY SURROUNDED BY POLICE CARS...

...AND YOU SAY, DR. FARR, THAT THE PERPETRATOR WAS NOT WHO HE SEEMED TO BE?

THAT'S RIGHT! HE LOOKED LIKE THE SCARECROW, BUT ACTUALLY, HE WAS THE JOKER!

OFFICER--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU LOOK PALE...

I--I FEEL STRANGE, ALL OF A SUDDEN--LIKE SOMETHING AWFUL'S GONNA HAPPEN--RIGHT AWAY!

IT IS CALLED FEAR, OFFICER--ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED BY MY PET RAVEN, NIGHTMARE!

HE SPRINKLED IT OVER THIS ENTIRE AREA TO HERALD MY ARRIVAL!

BUT AS THE SPRINKLING TAKES EFFECT AND THE RESEARCHERS AND TRAINED, HARDENED POLICE-MEN TURN TO FLEE IN BLIND FEAR...

OFFICER--TELL ME WHY THIS CROWD IS HERE!

AND WHERE DO THESE PEOPLE KEEP THE FEAR-GAS THEY SAY IS BETTER THAN MY OWN?

TH-THE JOKER STOLE IT! IT'S G-GONE!

THE JOKER--?! TELL ME HOW IT HAPPENED--

--OR I'LL TEACH YOU WHAT FEAR REALLY MEANS!

THE SCARECROW HEARS THE STORY--NOT LONG BEFORE DAWN BREAKS OVER THE FORLORN FACE OF SONNY NOVEMBER...

SO THE WARDEN GIVES ME FORTY BUCKS, THESE CRUMMY THREADS--AND TELLS ME TO GO STRAIGHT!

BUT WHO'S GONNA HIRE AN EX-CON WITH MY RECORD-- BESIDES MY OLD BOSS?

MR. NOVEMBER...?

I WILL PAY A SUBSTANTIAL SUM OF MONEY FOR THE LOCATION OF YOUR FORMER EMPLOYER'S HEADQUARTERS!

SCARECROW!

GEE, I CAN SURE USE THE BREAD--

--BUT I CAN'T TELL YA WHERE THE JOKER'S HA-HACIENDA IS!

VERY WELL, THEN CONSIDER MY CASH OFFER WITHDRAWN!

NOW--MR. NOVEMBER YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE THIS... HA-HACIENDA IS!

HEY! WHAT'RE YA SPRAYIN' ON ME--?

;GASP!; THAT'S THE STUFF YOU USE ... TO MAKE PEOPLE AFRAID!

I DON'T WANNA BE AFRAID!... I'M S-SCARED OF BEIN' AFRAID!

P-PLEASE... DON'T SCARE ME NO MORE!

MAYBE IT WON'T COUNT IF I WHISPER WHERE THE HA-HACIENDA IS!

AH, YES, I KNOW THE GENERAL AREA!

THANK YOU, MR. NOVEMBER!

AND AS THE MASTER OF FEAR DEPARTS...

IT DON'T COUNT... HA HA HA...

...'CAUSED I WHISPERED IT... HA HA HA...

...IT WASN'T MY F-FAULT... HA HA HA...

HO HO HEE HEE ;CHOKE;

THE DAY THREATENS TO BE A SCORCHER AS THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME* SITS IN HIS *HA-HACIENDA*...

...AND THE THEFT OF A RARE CHEMICAL FROM S.T.A.R. LABORATORIES WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE JOKER--NOT THE SCARECROW, AS FIRST REPORTED!

HEY, BOSS, WHAT'RE YOU--

SHUT UP, MEATHEAD... OR I'LL MISS HEARING *MY NAME* OVER THE RADIO!

...THE MAN WHO SUCCUMBED TO THE *LAUGHING DEATH* HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS *SONNY NOVEMBER*!

DIDJA HEAR THAT--? *SONNY'S DEAD!*

QUIET, YOU NERD, AND LET'S HEAR THE *DETAILS!*

A FORMER MEMBER OF THE *JOKER'S* GANG, SONNY IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN MURDERED BY HIS FORMER BOSS!

LET THAT BE A *LESSON* TO YOU, MY LEFT-HAND MAN--

--DON'T *SQUEAL!*

THE HYPNOTIC COMMAND I GAVE *SONNY* AUTOMATICALLY KILLED HIM WHEN HE REVEALED MY *HIDEAWAY!*

I'LL BET I KNOW *WHO* I'VE NOW MADE *ANGRY* ENOUGH TO WANT TO *FIND* ME, TOO!

SOUTHPAW, TAKE THIS *MOTH* TO THAT CROOKED ENTOMOLOGIST WE KNOW AND TELL HIM I WANT *2,000 LIVE ONES* JUST LIKE IT!

BUT FIRST WE MUST TELL OUR ANGRY FRIEND WHERE WE WENT!

MY ESTEEMED SCARECROW, WE'RE NOT IN NOW, BUT, YOU CAN FIND US AT:

HOWEVER, THE SCARECROW--ALIAS JONATHAN CRANE, PSYCHOLOGIST--HAS BUSINESS FIRST AT A NEARBY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS...

LUCKILY NO ONE'S SPOTTED ME SO FAR-- BUT I'M WELL-KNOWN ENOUGH HERE TO SOME FORMER COLLEAGUES...

...TO MAKE IT PRUDENT NOT TO BE RECOGNIZED!

THIS WILL KEEP PEOPLE AWAY AS SURE AS IF MY BREATH WERE SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF A CRATE OF GARLIC!

AND AS TWO STUDENTS APPROACH THROUGH A NEARBY CORRIDOR...

JERRY, YOU SURE YOU WANT TO WALK THIS WAY?

MAYBE IF WE WENT AROUND THE BUILDING INSTEAD--

YEAH, I GET THIS SPOOKY FEELING ALL OF A SUDDEN! AS A MATTER OF FACT...

...I THINK I'M SCARED OUT OF MY SKIN!

WAIT FOR ME, JERRY! DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!

AND PRESENTLY, IN A LABORATORY CLASSROOM...

THIS ACIDIC MIXTURE IS IDEAL FOR VAPORIZING A CERTAIN ALUMINUM ALLOY...

WHILE OUTSIDE THE LAB...

...THE VERY ALLOY USED TO CONTAIN A CERTAIN GAS IN A CERTAIN CANISTER!

I-I FEEL STRANGE!

LABORATORY 1

I DON'T THINK I'LL GO INTO MY CLASSROOM TODAY--

LABORATORY 1

--OR EVER AGAIN!

MEANTIME, THE JOKER IS PROCEEDING WITH HIS PLANS...

TOOTH... SOUTHPAW --

--YOU LOOK JUST LIKE THE STARS OF *MOVIN' ON*!

NOW GET INTO THAT TRUCK OUT FRONT!

AND MINUTES AFTER THE *HARLEQUIN OF HATE* AND HIS HENCHMEN HAVE LEFT THE *HA-HACIENDA*...

KA-DA-POW!

SHOW YOUR LURID FACE, *JOKER*!

THE SCARECROW AND HIS PAL *NIGHTMARE* HAVE COME TO--

EH? WHAT'S *THAT* ON THE FAR *WALL*?

MY ESTEEMED SCARECROW, WE'RE NOT IN NOW, BUT YOU CAN FIND US AT THE **CENTER PARK ZOO!** WHERE WE'RE GETTING A FEW LAUGHS!

HOW DID HE KNOW WE WERE COMING?

BUT IT'S DARN *WHITE* OF HIM TO TELL US WHERE TO *AMBUSH* HIM!

HEY! THIS IS A *WALKWAY*! YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT TRUCK IN!

WE'RE MAKIN' A *DELIVERY*!

CENTER PARK ZOO
GATE 2

TONY AT *GATE 2*-- A COUPLA GUYS IN A BIG SEMI-TRUCK BARRELED RIGHT BY ME INTO THE PARK --

--SEE IF YOU CAN STOP 'EM!

DO YOU DIG WHAT THIS CAPER'S ALL ABOUT?

BEATS ME, MAN-- I'M NOT SURE WHAT *WE'RE* DOIN' EITHER!

I JUST HOPE THE BOSS KNOWS!

HERE WE ARE-- AT CAGE 37...

HEY! NOW I UNDERSTAND-- LOOK!

HYENA

THE JOKER WANTS TO STEAL A MASCOT!

AN' WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN A LAUGHIN' HYENA!

QUIET--AND MAKE SURE YOUR NOSE FILTERS ARE IN TIGHT!

UH--OH--I THINK WE GOT COMPANY!

HEY, YOU CLOWNS...

POLICE

YOU JUST VIOLATED EIGHTEEN ORDINANCES AND--

HOLD ON, PAL! WE CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING BY DOING...

...THIS!

CLEAR OUT, WORLD--MY FRIENDS AND I HAVE A JOB TO DO!

FOR A SINGLE, UNCERTAIN MOMENT, EVERYONE FREEZES...

THE JOKER! GOT TO STOP THAT HOMICIDAL MANIAC!

:OOOH: MOTHS!

LOOK, CLARA, THE JOKER!

I AM NOT AMUSED!

AND THEN BIZARRE REALITY HITS--

S-SO SH-SHAKY... C-CAN'T H-HOLD ON TO G-GUN!

M-MOMMY, I'M AFRAID OF THOSE M-MOTHS!

ALEX-- T-TAKE US OUT OF H-HERE!

FOR SHAME! SCARED OF A FEW HARMLESS MOTHS...

...JUST BECAUSE THEIR WINGS WERE DOUSED IN FEAR-GAS!

HEE... HEE...HEE!

:TSK-TSK: BIG HUSKY, UNIFORM-WEARING GUYS LIKE YOU... FRIGHTENED OF THESE PRETTY LITTLE INSECTS?

JOKER...! LET US GO!

WE WON'T DO ANYTHING...

...WE PROMISE!

YOU AREN'T KIDDING, KIDDIES!

THIS IS MORE FUN THAN WATCHING BATMAN TRIP OVER HIS CAPE!

HA HA HA HA HA

WHILE WE WORK, THE BOSS CLOWNS AROUND!

YEAH--ONE MORE BAR AND *CHUCKLES* CAN FIT OUT!

CRETINS! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

BUT, BOSS... THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM TO GET THE *HYENA* OUT OF--

I TOLD YOU TO TAKE THE *WHOLE* CAGE APART, YOU *NINCOMPOOPS!*

IT'S NOT THAT *GOONY ANIMAL* I WANT--

--IT'S THAT BEAUTIFUL *CEILING*--FOR MY *HA-HACIENDA* WALL!

OKAY, BOSS, WE'LL HAVE IT OUT IN A COUPLA MINUTES...

THAT'LL BE THE DAY! *WAIT*--

I SEE WE HAVE A VISITOR--

--SOMEONE I'VE BEEN *EXPECTING!*

FORGET THE CAGE FOR NOW, *DOLTS*-- AND *GET LOST!*

AND DON'T THINK I WON'T TAKE THIS *GOOF* OUT OF YOUR PAY!

MEANWHILE, AT THE FRONT ZOO GATE...

THIS IS THE POLICE RIOT SQUAD!

KEEP CALM!

SKREEEE!!

POLICE RIOT SQUAD P.D. 17

ONCE WE DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THE CONFUSION, WE CAN...

POLICE 17

BY THE TIME YOU FIGURE WHAT HAPPENED--IT'LL BE ALL OVER!

AND INSIDE, WHERE THE CROWD IS NO MORE...

YOUR MEN ARE DESERTING YOU, JOKER! AM I BAD COMPANY?

ON THE CONTRARY, I KNEW YOU WERE COMING...

...SO I BAKED A CAKE!

HA HA HA HA HA

STOP IT, NIGHTMARE!

BLAM!

JOKER!-- YOU BLEW UP MY BIRD!

I'LL KILL YOU FOR THAT!

AWW, RELAX! YOUR PET'S OKAY--

--HE'S JUST COVERED WITH CAKE MUCK!

HYEN

I'M...BEING DRIVEN CRAZY!

THAT'S WHAT YOU DO...! YOU'RE A CRAZY MAN WHO TRIES TO MAKE EVERYONE ELSE CRAZY!

THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME!

LIRGPHH!

I DON'T GET IT! BY NOW YOU SHOULD BE SCARED OUT OF YOUR WITS BY MY FEAR-GAS!

MY GUESS IS YOU'RE WEARING A NOSE-FILTER!

HEY, HEY! TWO POINTS FOR THE GUY WITH THE RETARDED TAILOR!

WELL, I DON'T ONLY DO IT WITH SMELLY STUFF...

I'LL SPRAY YOU WITH THE SAME FEAR-MIST THAT MADE SONNY NOVEMBER'S SKIN CRAWL!

DON'T TALK ILL OF THE DEAD--

--EVEN IF SONNY WAS A CRETIN!

I MEANT TO USE THIS FREEZE-JUICE WHEN YOU WERE LOSING YOUR COOL--BUT MY TIMING WAS OFF!

YEEOWW!

OOOH--WHAT A NASTY TRICK! GET HIM FOR THAT, NIGHTMARE!

:URRF!:

DESIST--YOU LICE-RIDDEN SPECIMEN OF WINGED VERTEBRATE!

HEY! TWO AGAINST ONE! NO FAIR, SCARECROW!

LOOK WHO'S CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK!

GRAB HIS NOSE, NIGHTMARE!

OWOO!.. YOU "STYGIAN" REFUGEE FROM A "POE" POEM!

YOU'VE DISLODGED MY NOSTRIL FILTERS--

--AND RUINED MY CLASSIC FACIAL FEATURES!

WE'LL DO WORSE THAN THAT...WITH THIS VIAL OF ACID I BREWED UP IN MY OLD UNIVERSITY LAB!

NOW WE'LL SEE IF COMEDY IS MIGHTIER THAN FEAR!

YOU CAN'T POUR THAT STUFF ON MY GAS CAN!

YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR THIS, SCARECROW...

...TO S.T.A.R. LABORATORIES! IT'S THEIR PROPERTY, YOU DUMMY!

SO IS THE GAS THAT'S SEEPING OUT NOW!

LET'S SEE IF THEIR FORMULA IS BETTER THAN MINE!

:OOHH!: I'M AFRAID! I'VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID... BUT I AM NOW!

EVIDENTLY, S.T.A.R.'S GAS IS EFFECTIVE, AFTER ALL, JOKER!

IF IT WERE MY FORMULA, YOU WOULD BE TOO SCARED... TO SPEAK BY NOW...OR EVEN BREATHE...

...TEE-HEE!

WAS THAT A "TEE-HEE" I JUST HEARD FROM YOU, OLD FERRET-FACE?

:HEE-HEE: THERE WASN'T ANY FEAR FORMULA IN THAT GAS TANK!

YOU SUBSTITUTED :YOO-HOO: LAUGHING GAS IN THERE!

WHAT A :HA-HA-HO-HO-HO: GREAT JOKE ON ME!

BECAUSE YOU'RE GENERALLY SUCH A *SOURPUSS*, YOU'RE ESPECIALLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO MY SPECIAL FORMULA *GIGGLE GAS!*

HA HA HEE HO HO!

ADMIT IT, *SCARECROW*-- YOU HAVEN'T ENJOYED YOURSELF THIS MUCH SINCE *NIGHTMARE* WAS A *CHICK!*

YOU SAID IT, *JOKER!*

HERE COME THE POLICE--*HO-HO*-- FUNNIEST THING I EVER SAW!

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

HA-HA

I EVEN KNOW A DYNAMITE WAY TO EVADE THOSE MINIONS OF THE LAW!

I HAVE THIS SECRET ENTRANCE TO MY COZY HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME* -- THROUGH MY *MINI-HA-HACIENDA!***

* *THE JOKER'S* PADDED CELL IN *ARKHAM ASYLUM!*

** *THE JOKER'S* AUXILIARY HIDEAWAY UNDERNEATH HIS PRISON CELL!—*Editor*.

AND LATER THAT VERY DAY, AT ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE...

I STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE JOKER GOT OUT OF HIS *LOCKED CELL!*

YEAH--AND WE TOOK SUCH PRECAUTIONS -- EVEN PUT HIM IN A *STRAIT JACKET!*

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

TH-THAT *LAUGH--!?*

IT'S *THE JOKER*-- HE'S *BACK!*

HA

HA

HA

HA

BUT *HOW--?*

END

HAHA HA-HA HA

THE JOKER
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
BATMAN'S ARCH-FOE!
30c
NO. 9
OCT.
32443

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

"THE CAT AND THE CLOWN!"

SNAPP

STARRING THE JOKER and CO-STARRING CATWOMAN

A PAIR OF FAMOUS VILLAINS WANTED TO KIDNAP

"THE CAT AND THE CLOWN!"

...BUT NEITHER OF THE VICTIMS COULD GUESS THE REASON WHY!

KATHY'S L.I. POTATOES 200 LBS

RAMISKY BAG & BURLAP CO.

Screenplay by ELLIOT S! MAGGIN

Art Direction, Sets, and Costumes by IRV NOVICK and TEX BLAISDELL

Produced by JULIUS SCHWARTZ

Choreography by BOB ROZAKIS

IN THE SUBURBS OF *GOTHAM CITY* SITS AN AWE-SOME THOUSAND-ACRE SPREAD FULL OF WARE-HOUSES, EQUIPMENT, AND PEOPLE--

MAMMOTH

--A FANTASY-FACTORY CALLED *MAMMOTH MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS*...

WHERE A MUCH-BELOVED STAR IS ABOUT TO SEE A PREVIEW OF HIS LONG-AWAITED RETURN TO THE SILVER SCREEN....

MR. SPRINGER, WE'RE READY TO ROLL SOON AS YOU'RE IN THE SCREENING ROOM!

GLAD TO SEE YOU BROUGHT YOUR CAT WITH YOU!

HOW COULD *BENNY SPRINGER* FORGET HIS FAVORITE CO-STAR -- *HIAWATHA*?

IT'S NO SECRET I ONLY AGREED TO DO THIS FILM BECAUSE *HIAWATHA* COULD BE IN IT TOO!

LEAD THE WAY, MY BOY... AND ON WITH THE SHOW!

I'VE BEEN TANGLING WITH A *MASTER OF DISGUISE* SO LONG...

SCREENING STUDIO

... I THINK SOME OF IT'S *RUBBED OFF!*

SCREENING STUDIO

THIS *BENNY SPRINGER* GET-UP IS SO GOOD IT COULD EVEN FOOL HIS *CAT*! HAHAHA!

DO YOU THINK A LOWLY *SCRIPT-GIRL* CAN SNEAK A PEEK AT YOUR NEW MOVIE, MR. SPRINGER--?

A LOWLY ONE CAN'T, BUT *YOU* CAN!

HAHA! I COULD CHARM THE PANTS OFF A *CENTIPEDE*!

TAKE A LONG, HARD GUESS AT WHO THIS FAKE *BENNY SPRINGER* IS AND YOU'LL PROBABLY BE *RIGHT*...

SCREENING IN PROGRESS

BUT IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN *NEXT*--

--YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER *THINK* COMING!

I'LL MUFFLE THE REAL *SPRINGER'S* EXIT IN THE DARK AND SUBSTITUTE MYSELF FOR...

KPOW!

AND WHEN THE *MADCAP MOUNTEBANK* NEXT SEES CONSCIOUSNESS...

:OWWW: WHAT DIVE-BOMBER HIT ME...?

HEY! I MUST STILL BE *BENNY SPRINGER!* BUT HOW DID...

HE'S COMING AROUND, CHIEF! WANNA TALK TO HIM?

BENNY... *BENNY?* WHAT HAPPENED, FELLA?

WHAT HAPPENED--?

I DON'T REMEMBER A THING!

YES... I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER! EVERYTHING WAS SO FAST...

"LISTEN--YOU AND *HIAWATHA* WERE IN THE SCREENING ROOM WITH THE STUDIO BRASS WATCHING YOUR NEW FILM, *THE CAT AND THE CLOWN*..."

LOOK AT THE SMILES ON THESE FACES, BENNY!

THE *MONEY MEN* ALL SEEM TO BE DELIGHTED!

:OOOOH: THERE'S THE *MILLION-DOLLAR KITTY*--

--THE *CLARK GABLE* OF *CATS!*

NEXT TIME, BENNY, WE SIGN *YOU* AND *YOUR CAT* FOR SEPARATE PICTURES AND *DOUBLE* THE PROFITS!

"BUT JUST THEN, A SHADOW FELL ACROSS THE SCREEN..."

FACE IT, BIG MOVIE STAR...

...YOU CAN'T SEE IN THE DARK--

-BUT THE CATWOMAN CAN!

"THE SHE-DEVIL TOOK EVERYONE IN THE SCREENING ROOM BY SURPRISE..."

"AND AS WE MIGHT HAVE GUESSED, IT WAS *YOU* AND *HIAWATHA* SHE WAS AFTER..."

THEN SHE CUT COMMUNICATION LINES. LOCKED US ALL IN THE THEATER, AND TOOK OFF WITH YOU AND *HIAWATHA* NEATLY WRAPPED UP IN THE NET!

WHEN WE FOUND YOU UNCONSCIOUS OUTSIDE THE THEATER, WE ASSUMED SHE ONLY WANTED THE *CAT!*

SO THE LITTLE WENCH WHO BONKED ME WAS REALLY THE *CATWOMAN--?!*

NOW WITH SPRINGER AND THE CAT IN *HER* BAG INSTEAD OF *MINE*, SHE'LL COLLECT A FAT *JUICY RANSOM* FOR THEIR RETURN--

--BUT NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT! TIME TO DROP THIS CHARADE AND *SPLIT!*

Y-YOUR FACE... IT'S *DEAD WHITE!*

YOU'RE NOT *BENNY SPRINGER*... YOU'RE--

--THE JOKER, OF COURSE! OUT OF MY WAY, CRETIN-- I'VE GOT A HOT DATE TO FIX A KITTY'S CATNIP!

IF I SAY I'M GOING OUT THAT WINDOW, YOU GUARDS'LL PROBABLY SAY, "OVER OUR DEAD BODIES!"

WELL, SAVE YOUR BREATH...

...BECAUSE IT'LL BE YOUR LAST!

P-PHHT!

LAST BREATH -HA HA HA- AIN'T THAT FUNNY?

HE GOT US WITH DARTS FROM HIS BLOWGUN! HA HA HA HA HA!

HA-HA-HA-HA! BENNY SPRINGER WAS REALLY THE JOKER! SURE IS A HOWL! HA HA HA!

HA-HA-HA- THOUGHT SPRINGER WAS ONLY A CLOWN ON THE SCREEN! HA-HA-HA!

ISN'T IT ALL HYSTER--HYS-- HGGGH...

GGGHHHFFF

AND AS THE JOKER'S VICTIMS LAUGH THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN, THE HELLISH HARLEQUIN MAKES HIS GETAWAY...

CAN'T GET OFF THE LOT AS BENNY SPRINGER... OTHER SECURITY GUARDS WILL BE LOOKING FOR ME!

GOT TO RUSTLE UP A NEW DISGUISE!

SOUND STAGE 2

MAYBE I CAN GET ONE IN *HERE!*

HEY, WHO'S *THAT?*

WHAT'S HE DO--*HA HA!*

SOUND STAGE 2

IT'S *THE HA HA HA JOKER! HA HA HA HARRGGH!*

THAT'S ONE MOVIE WHERE THE *BAD GUY'S* THE *WINNER--*

--"*THE MIDNIGHT RUSTLER*" --THAT'S *ME!*

MEANWHILE, SECURITY IS TIGHTENED AT THE STUDIO'S MAIN GATE...

RIGHT, CHIEF! THERE'S NO WAY *THE JOKER* CAN GET PAST HERE WITHOUT MY NOTICIN'...

YEEHAH! RIDE 'EM, COWBOY!

POW! POW! POW!

HUH--?

NICHOLS! WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON OUT THERE?!

POW! POW!

UH... JUST ONE OF THEM *GUN-HAPPY* COWBOYS PASSIN' BY, CHIEF!

STILL NO SIGN OF *THE JOKER!*

NEXT DAY, THE HEADLINES TELL THE STORY...

GOTHAM GUARDIAN

DARING SNATCH OF BENNY SPRINGER AND CAT CO-STAR BY CATWOMAN!

JOKER ALSO INVOLVED! MASQUERADES AS SPRINGER!

SO! THAT WAS *THE JOKER* DRESSED AS YOU...

...AND *THE JOKER*, BEING A CERTIFIED *LOON*, CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS WHEN HIS *PLANS* ARE INTERFERED WITH--

--THOUGH WHAT THAT *MADMAN* WANTS WITH *YOU*, I HAVE NO IDEA!

BUT *YOU* CAN SAY WHAT A *MAD-WOMAN* WANTG WITH *ME!*

NOW, NOW-- IS THAT ANY WAY FOR THE *BEST-LOVED* CLOWN ON FILM TO BEHAVE--

--ESPECIALLY WHEN HE AND HIS VALUABLE PET ARE GOING TO COST THEIR STUDIO A RECORD AMOUNT IN *RANSOM!*

THAT IS, *AFTER* YOU SERVE AS *BAIT* FOR *THE JOKER!*

COME AGAIN?

THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP *THE JOKER* FROM INTERFERING WITH *MY* PROJECT IS TO LET HIM CARRY OUT *HIS OWN!*

BY "LEAKING" WORD OF WHERE *YOU* ARE--

RIP

RIP

--I CAN LURE HIM ONTO MY *HOME GROUND*, WHERE I CAN'T *HELP* BUT OVERPOWER HIM!

AND WITH ANY LUCK AT ALL, I'LL GET THAT *SEXY BATMAN* HERE TOO!

BUT EVEN BEFORE WORD GETS OUT -- AT *THE JOKER'S* ZANY DEN, THE *HA-HACIENDA*...

YOU SAY YOU'VE FOUND A MEMBER OF *CATWOMAN'S* CROWD, *SOUTHPAW*? WELL, BRING HIM IN ...*BRING HIM IN!*

OF *COURSE* HE CAN SEE WHERE THE HIDE-OUT IS! HE'LL *NEVER* TELL ANYONE!

HA-HA-HA HA

AND SHORTLY, *THE JOKER* USHERS IN A NEW ACQUAINTANCE...

YOUR *GUEST*, BOSS -- HIS NAME'S *MOUTH MADIGAN!*

MOUTH? HOW APPROPRIATE! WON'T YOU HAVE A SEAT?

YOU'RE ABOUT TO GIVE US SOME INFORMATION --

-- NAMELY, THE LOCATION OF *THE CATWOMAN'S LAIR!*

HEY! WHY'D YOU GUYS PICK *ME*?

WHUZZAT YOU'RE DOIN', *JOKER*, HEY?

YOU'VE NO DOUBT HEARD OF THE *LAUGHING DEATH*? THIS IS THE LITTLE DRUG THAT *CAUSES* IT!

HEY! YEOWW!!

WHADDYA WANT?

WILL YIZ GIMME THE *ANTIDOTE* IF I SPILL IT, HEY?

SPILL AWAY, *MOUTH!*

IT'S -- HEH-HEH -- IN A WAREHOUSE BASEMENT... *HA HA!*

CORNER OF *BROOME* AND *GREENE STREETS! HA! HA! HAH!*

THERE -- I TOLD YA... *HAH! HAH!*... HEY?

NOW... HOW 'BOUT THE ... *HYUCK! HACKK!*... THE *ANTIDOTE?*

WHAT *ANTIDOTE*? I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THERE BEING AN *ANTIDOTE!*

COME, SOUTHPAW! MY *DISGUISE* IN MY VEHICLE!

MEANWHILE, IN THE *CATWOMAN'S* LAIR, *BENNY SPRINGER* HACKS AWAY AT HIS BONDS AGAINST THE CHAIR'S CLAWED FEET...

RRIP!

AND SLOWLY SEEMS TO BE ACHIEVING SUCCESS..

SNAP

...JUST AS *THE CATWOMAN* ATTEMPTS TO MAKE A FRIEND...

WHY ARE YOU SO HOSTILE, KITTY?

CATS AND I HAVE A *NATURAL RAPPORT*--

HISS-- SPAH!

:OWOHH!:

YOU TRAINED THIS CAT TO BE *PERVERTED*, SPRINGER!

JUST THEN, SPRINGER FREES HIMSELF...

GOOD WORK, *HIAWATHA*! LET'S *GO*!

GET THEM, *SPOTS*!

ONE MEMBER OF THE PAIR GETS CAUGHT...

RROWR!

..BUT THE OTHER DOES NOT...

CATWOMAN'S NOCTURNAL! SHE WON'T FOLLOW ME OUT HERE IN THE *DAYLIGHT*...

...BUT AS SOON AS I FREE MY HANDS, I'VE GOT TO GO *BACK IN*!

NO PARKIN

AND GETTING *HIAWATHA* OUT OF THERE WILL TAKE THE *ACTING* JOB OF MY *LIFE*!

BACK INSIDE, THE *FELINE FEMME FATALE* FIGURES HER NEXT MOVE, WHEN--

SO WE MEET *AGAIN*, MY DEAR!

I ACTUALLY MANAGED TO ATTRACT *YOUR* ATTENTION THIS TIME--?

HERE IS YOUR *REWARD*--!

MMF--

ENOUGH OF THIS, *CATWOMAN*! WHERE'D YOU STASH *BENNY SPRINGER*?

AW, *RATS*!

I *KNEW* THIS WASN'T A *SOCIAL CALL*!

I *COULD* TELL YOU THE SIMPLE TRUTH--THAT *HIAWATHA* IS IN A CAGE OVER THERE--

--AND THAT *SPRINGER* JUST *ESCAPED* TO WHO-KNOWS-WHERE!

BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D *BELIEVE* THAT!

SO *PLAYTIME'S* OVER!

MAYBE FOR *THE BATMAN*-- BUT NOT FOR *ME*!

KLANG!

THE JOKER?! MASQUERADING AS *THE BATMAN*!

WHY YOU *PHONEY*--!

PHONEY IS *RIGHT*! HE'S NOT *THE JOKER*--

--I AM!

WHAT'S THAT-- YOU *PHONEY BALONEY!?*

TWO JOKERS! HMM... HOW *INTERESTING!*

IF ONE IS THE *REAL JOKER*-- THEN *WHO* IS THE *IMPOSTOR?*

I'M BETTING HE'S *BENNY SPRINGER*, THE *MOVIE CLOWN!*

SUDDENLY, THE *REAL JOKER* SPRINGS WITH ENERGY BORN OF MADNESS...

I'LL *RIP* YOU APART!

--PROVING *YOU'RE* THE *RIP-OFF* ARTIST NOT *ME!*

:UNHH:

FIRST *CATWOMAN* AND NOW THIS *FUMBLING FRAUD--*

--THEY'RE WRECKING MY CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED PLANS...

...TO KIDNAP *SPRINGER* AND BECOME A MOVIE CELEBRITY FOR A WHILE BY *MASQUERADING* AS HIM!

AND WHY NOT?

I *DESERVE* HIS KIND OF FAME BECAUSE *HE'S* JUST A *MAKE-BELIEVE* CLOWN, WHILE--

--I'M FOR *REAL!*

MAD! INSANE! HOW DO I COMPETE WITH THIS *NUT?*

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE *DETERMINED* TO FIGHT IT OUT!

GOOD! I'LL HANDLE THE *WINNER*!

BUT FOR NOW, I'LL GIVE THEM SOME ROOM BY GETTING THE *CAGE* OUT OF THEIR WAY!

IF I'M TO CONVINCE *CATWOMAN* THAT *I'M THE JOKER*, I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING REALLY *ZANY*!

FASCINATING-- *MOST* FASCINATING!

UPSY-DAISY!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON--?

JUST TRYING TO *DRUM* SOME *INFORMATION* INTO YOUR THICK SKULL!

:OWOOO!: DESIST, YOU *MANIAC*! YOU'RE CRAZIER THAN THE *MAD HATTER*!

HA-HA-HA!

NOW YOU'RE GETTING THE *MESSAGE*!

O.K:- YOU'RE *NUTTY* ENOUGH...

... BUT YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT AS *THE JOKER*, 'CAUSE--

--YOU'RE JUST *NOT* *RUTHLESS*... *HOMICIDAL*!

DON'T *BET* ON IT, BUB!

=`WHEWIEE.!=
THAT WAS *CLOSE!*

I SURE *UNDERESTIMATED* THAT *CHARACTER!*

NOT ONLY DOES HE RESEMBLE ME TO A *J*--

--BUT HE ALSO SEEMS TO MATCH MY MOST *CHARMING* TRAITS-- *INSANITY* AND *VICIOUSNESS!*

IN FACT, IF I WEREN'T SURE OF MY *IDENTITY*--

--I MIGHT EVEN BELIEVE *HE* WAS *ME!*

ABSOLUTELY *WILD*--

--*LITERALLY* AND *FIGURATIVELY* OFF-*THE-WALL!*

GOOD AS YOU ARE, *PAL*-- HERE'S WHERE YOU GET POLISHED OFF BY *THE MASTER*--

--THE *ONE* AND *ONLY JOKER!*

WHUMP!

URGPHH!

STILL SUFFERING FROM *DELUSIONS* OF *GRANDEUR*, EH?

FAR OUT! BUT I SHOULD'VE EXPECTED SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

INSANE EVENTS TRAIL AFTER *THE JOKER* LIKE FLIES FOLLOW A *GARBAGE TRUCK!*

LOOKS LIKE YOUR *LUCK'S* RUN OUT ON YOU!

HERE, LET ME GIVE YOU A *HELPING HAND!*

HOW ABOUT PLAYING THE *WHEEL OF FORTUNE?*

ATTABOY--THAT'S USING YOUR *HEAD!*

MAYBE YOU'LL GET *LUCKY* AND WIN THE *BOOBY PRIZE! HAHAHA!*

:URRGPH!:

HEY-- WHAT'SA MATTER, MAN...

...DON'T BE SUCH A *SORE LOSER!*

HAHA!

HA-HA-HA

WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU...

...YOU'LL BE *SORE--LOSER!*

WHO'S CALLING *WHOM* A LOSER?

:'UNGHH.!:

SAY...YOU'RE LOOKING GROGGY, *CHUM!*

HMM... *HE'S* OPERATING LIKE THE *REAL JOKER--*

SO--WHY DON'T I *JUICE* YOU UP A BIT?

--SQUIRTING THE OTHER'S EYES WITH *LINIMENT!*

BUT MOMENTARY BLINDNESS WOULDN'T STOP THE *REAL* JOKER--

--ANY MORE THAN IT WOULD STOP A KIDNAPPED MAN FIGHTING FOR HIS *FREEDOM*!

HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THEY'VE REACHED A *STALEMATE*! SO--

--KNOCK IT OFF, *BOYS*! THE *WALTZ* IS *OVER*!

YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO *PROVE* TO *ME* WHO *THE JOKER* IS BY THIS CLOWNING AROUND!

SO I'M GOING TO LEAVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE--

--*BENNY SPRINGER'S CAT*!

BECAUSE I'M *SURE* ONE OF YOU *IS* BENNY SPRINGER-- THE CAT WILL RUN RIGHT TO ITS *MASTER* AND MAKE THE *IDENTIFICATION*!

WHEREUPON I'LL *PELT* THE *IMPOSTOR* WITH MY *CAT'S-PAW*!

SCAT-- YOU KRAZY KITTY!

I'M NOT YOUR CLOWNISH, CLODDISH MASTER!

I'M THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME!

NO--NO! YA GOTTA BELIEVE ME, CATWOMAN!

I'M THE J-JOKE--

ZAP

:UNNN:

THAT'LL TEACH YOU TO INSULT FELINE INTELLIGENCE, YOU FRAUD!

A CAT KNOWS THE SCENT OF ITS MASTER...

...AND CATWOMAN KNOWS THE LOOK OF--

--OF A LOSER, CATWOMAN?

CLANG!

YOU--BENNY SPRINGER?! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

NO CAT CAN BE TRAINED WELL ENOUGH TO GO TO THE WRONG PERSON-- NOT EVEN MINE!

NO CAT EXCEPT MY MILLION DOLLAR KITTY--WHEN I GAVE HIM A SECRET SIGNAL!

OPERATOR-- GIVE ME THE POLICE!

THE JOKER AND CATWOMAN ARE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND-- SOME DAYS LATER...

THE INMATES NEED THIS SORT OF THING!

IT'S A GREAT IDEA FOR THEM TO SEE THIS MOVIE, WARDEN!

ARKHAM HOSPITAL

CALL ME DOCTOR! WE DON'T HAVE WARDENS HERE!

SORRY--ANYWAY, THE PRISONERS--ER--I MEAN PATIENTS... SHOULD BE ON THEIR WAY TO THE AUDITORIUM NOW!

DIRECTOR ARKHAM HOSPITAL

YES--AND THE FILM IS SCHEDULED TO ROLL IN A FEW MINUTES!

DIRECTOR ARKHAM HOSPITAL

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME IN OBSERVING PATIENT-REACTION TO IT, DOCTOR?

WHEN THE LIGHTS IN THE AUDITORIUM DIM...

THE CAT AND THE CLOWN

HEY, THIS IS A MOVIE WITH BENNY SPRINGER--

--THE CLOWN WHO OUTSMARTED THE JOKER--

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

HA HA HA

starring THE Joker

WAITAMINNIT! WHAT IS THIS--?

HOW'D YOU GET INTO THIS PICTURE, JOKER?

YOU AIN'T STARRING IN THIS FILM!

OH YES I AM! I SPLICED MY "LOVELY" LAUGHING FACE INTO THE MASTER FILM--SO IT'D BE IN EVERY PRINT!

IT'S MY LAST LAUGH-- I ALWAYS WANTED TO STAR IN A MOVIE!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

THE END

THE JOKER

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

VERSUS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

NO.10

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JOKER

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

ERNIE CHUA 1976

SCENE: A CRIMINAL HIDEOUT SOMEWHERE IN NORTH AMERICA.
THE LOCATION IS NOT IMPORTANT--WHAT'S GOING ON THERE IS!
HERE BEGINS THE STRANGEST SAGA EVER IN THE CAREER OF THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME...
THE Joker
HAHAHAHA
NOT A HOAX!--NOT A DREAM!--NOT AN "IMAGINARY TALE"!--BUT WEIRDER THAN ALL THREE!
AND IN THE SPIRIT OF THAT CRYPTIC "TEASER," WE'LL EXPLAIN NO MORE--NOT EVEN WHY THIS STORY IS TITLED...
"99 and 99/100% DEAD!"
SCRIPT: MARTIN PASKO
ART: IRV NOVICK
EDITING: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
SPECIAL THANKS TO PAUL KUPPERBERG

DOCTOR, I'VE *KILLED* THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE*-- ALL OF THEM...EXCEPT *THE BATMAN!*

AND THAT'S MY *PROBLEM!* YOU SEE, THEY'RE DEAD... YET THEY'RE *NOT* DEAD!

AND *YOU*, YOU SILLY TWIT, ARE *RESPONSIBLE* FOR THIS--IN A *WAY!*

IF NOT FOR YOU, I'D STILL BE IN AN ASYLUM FOR THE *CRIMINALLY INSANE!*

"SO PERHAPS I SHOULD *THANK* YOU FOR THAT DAY IN YOUR OFFICE..."

THE COURT ORDERS THAT YOU UNDERGO *PSYCHO-SURGERY* IMMEDIATELY...

...TO PERMANENTLY *ERASE* YOUR *PATHOLOGICAL TENDENCIES!*

Y-YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A...A... *LOBOTOMY!*

WE WILL MERELY *ELIMINATE* YOUR *ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR!* IT'S FOR YOUR *OWN GOOD!*

YOU EXPECT *ME* TO BELIEVE THAT TURNING ME INTO A *VEGETABLE* IS FOR MY OWN GOOD?

WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM-- *CRAZY?*

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS--!

LATER...

FAUSTUS! HIM I CAN *RELATE* TO-- BRILLIANT, CUNNING... AND DELICIOUSLY *MAD!*

IF ONLY I COULD PREVENT MY OPERATION-- AND *PRESERVE* MY DIVINE GIFT OF *INSANITY...*

DR. FAUSTUS BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

...AT LEAST LONG ENOUGH TO *SLAY* MY DREAD ENEMY, *THE BATMAN!*

THEN, I, TOO, WOULD *SELL MY SOUL!*

DR. FAUSTUS BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

AND THEN... IT HAPPENED!

AND YOU, I TAKE IT, ARE THE DEVIL?

AAH, DEVIL, SCHMEVIL! CALL ME LOU, BABY-- LOU CIPHER!

OHH, HOW PERFECTLY BANAL!

JOKER--BABY, BOOBIE, SWEETIE-- HAVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU!

POOF

I'M HAVING ANOTHER PSYCHOTIC DELUSION! MARVELOUS-- MARVELOUS!

SO TELL ME... WHAT MUST I DO TO GAIN MY RELEASE--SELL MY SOUL?

?! AWW, COME ON, JOKIE, BABY! WHADDYA THINK THIS IS--THE TWILIGHT ZONE?

ALL YA GOTTA DO IS INK THIS DEAL--YOU KNOW, PUT YER HAN-COCK ON THE DOTTED LINE?

Contract

PLUS DO A LITTLE GIG WE GOT YOU BOOKED FOR!

"GIG"?

YEAH! THERE'S THIS SCIENTIST DUDE WHO'S PERFECTING A HEALTH SERUM...

...WHICH WILL CURE AND IMMUNIZE AGAINST EVERY DISEASE THE BRAIN-BOYS EVER HEARD OF!

ARKHAM HOSPITAL

THERE'S JUST ONE HITCH! THE SERUM ALSO PROMOTES SPONTANEOUS TISSUE REGENERATION! YOU DIG--?

PRECISELY! THAT SERUM WOULD MAKE PEOPLE IMMORTAL!

YOU GOT IT, BOOBIE! NOBODY WOULD EVER DIE WITH THAT STUFF AROUND!

VERY BAD FOR MY KINDA BUSINESS-- YOU DIG?

"BUT THERE WAS A *LARGER* PROBLEM--THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE...*"

--SO I FEEL WE *MUST* HELP PERFECT THIS SERUM!

AND *I* CAN'T HELP THINKING, *SUPERMAN*, THAT SUCH A *CURE-ALL*...

...WOULD GET THE *EARTH* INTO *BIGGER* TROUBLE THAN IT'S IN *NOW!*

EXCUSE ME, PEOPLE--WE'VE BEEN AT THIS *DEBATE* ALMOST *24 HOURS* NOW!

IT'S TIME I *RECHARGED* MY *POWER RING!*

I *ANTICIPATED* THIS WOULD BE A LONG MEETING --SO I BROUGHT THE BATTERY ALONG!

IN BRIGHTEST DAY, IN BLACKEST NIGHT, NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE--

"*SUDDENLY...*"

OF COURSE, *I* LEARNED ABOUT THAT BLINDING GREEN FLASH ONLY *LATER*, WHEN--

--BUT I'M GETTING *AHEAD* OF MYSELF!

SINCE THE *JLA KNEW* OF THE SERUM...

...WHAT YOU GOTTA DO, *JOKIE*-BABY, IS *SKRAG* THE *JLA* SO THEY CAN'T HELP DISTRIBUTE THAT SERUM...

...THEN *KILL* THE SCIENTIST *HIMSELF!* IN RETURN, I'LL GRANT YOUR EVERY *WISH*...

...INCLUDING BECOMING *THE BATMAN'S EXECUTIONER!*

"SOON, IN A HOSPITAL NEAR THE *ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE...*"

I'LL *GET* YOU FOR THIS, YOU FREUDIAN *FRAUD!*

WAIT! THIS PATIENT HASN'T BEEN PREPARED FOR *SURGERY!*

YOU INCOMPETENTS! HIS HEAD MUST BE *SHAVED!*

"I MUST'VE BEEN *CRAZY* WITH *RAGE*--OR *MORE SO* THAN *USUAL*--BECAUSE THE ADRENALINE SURGED THROUGH MY BODY, GIVING ME GREAT *STRENGTH...*"

THAT'S THE *LAST STRAW!*

AS IF STEALING MY CHERISHED *MADNESS* ISN'T ENOUGH--!

SNAP

SNAP

HA HA HA HA HA

GUARD--VIOLENT DISTURBANCE IN O.R.!

FREEZE, JOKER!

KER-POW!

HA HA HA

OXYGEN

BADOOM!

"OF COURSE, DOCTOR, *YOU RECALL* WHAT HAPPENED A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE *OXYGEN EXPLOSION*?..."

DOCTOR! DOCTOR! THE WHOLE PLACE IS GOING *CRAZY!*

HAVE YOU HEARD WHAT HAPPENED IN THE *O.R.*?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, DOCTOR...

I HAVE!

HAHAHA!

OH MY GOD...

THEN YOU KNOCKED ME OUT WITH A SHOTOF *SODIUM PENTOTHAL* AND BROUGHT ME *HERE*--?

CORRECT! YOU'VE BEEN MY *CAPTIVE* FOR SEVERAL *DAYS!*

NOW, AS FOR HOW I *KILLED* THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE*...

"I BEGAN IN *CENTRAL CITY* WITH A GARDEN-VARIETY ROBBERY...

"...JUST A FEW MINKS FROM A FUR STORAGE WAREHOUSE..."

"JUST AS I WAS MAKING OFF IN MY *HEH-- HELICOPTER...*

"...WHAT TO MY WONDERING EYES SHOULD APPEAR BUT OL' *BUSTLING-- BUNS* HIMSELF--*THE FLASH!*

THE JOKER-- ON MY HOME GROUND?

WHEN *I* GET THROUGH WITH HIM, HE'LL BE CACKLING OUT OF THE *OTHER* SIDE OF HIS PASTY FACE!

ROZAKIS FUR STORAGE

"*I HOPED* HE'D HAVE SOME FLASHY MANEUVER TO *STOP* ME--AND HE CERTAINLY *DID*...

"*I* MUST CONFESS I ALMOST *ADMIRED* HIS *INGENUITY*-- SKIPPING FROM ONE WHIRLING BLADE TO ANOTHER AT *HYPER-SPEED*...

"...COUNTER TO THEIR MOVEMENT-- BRINGING THE CHOPPER TO A *DEAD STOP!*

"*INSTANTLY*, THE WHIRLYBIRD STARTED TO DROP TOWARD TO THE WAREHOUSE ROOF--BUT THE *SCARLET SPEEDSTER BEAT* IT THERE!"

"THEN HE CREATED AN *UPDRAFT* TO *EASE* THE 'COPTER ONTO THE ROOF-- WHICH KEPT HIM ROOTED TO THE SPOT...

"...WHICH WAS EXACTLY WHERE I *WANTED* HIM!"

YOU'VE HEARD OF *LAUGHING GAS*, HAVEN'T YOU, *FLASH*?

WELL, YOU AIN'T HEARD OF *NOTHIN'* YET! *HA HA HA!*

"AND AFTER THE CHOPPER HAD TOUCHED DOWN..."

YOU TOOK *ADVANTAGE--HAH--* OF MY *FIXED* POSITION-- HA HA--TO ZAP ME WITH THAT *GAS!*

THAT'S *NOT HA*--FUNNY AT *ALL! HA HA!*

SO WHY THE HECK-- *HA HA*--AM I *LAUGHING? HA-HA-HA!*

BECAUSE, MY FINE FLASHING FOOL, THAT *WAS* LAUGHING GAS-- BUT TREATED WITH A SUPER-CONCENTRATED *AMPHETAMINE*...

...WHICH IS NOW SPEEDING UP YOUR METABOLISM...

HA HA HA

HA HA

...CAUSING YOU TO LAUGH AT *SUPER-SPEED!* OF COURSE, THE *STRAIN* WILL SOON BE *TOO MUCH* FOR YOU...

...AND YOU WILL *LAUGH* YOURSELF TO *DEATH!*

HOW *DELIGHTFUL!* I'VE TURNED THE SPEED *KING* INTO A SPEED *FREAK!*

AND--AS EVERYONE KNOWS--

--*SPEED KILLS!*

HA HA HA

HA HA

ODD... I DON'T RECALL HEARING ABOUT *THE FLASH* BEING *KILLED*--

CERTAINLY *NOT*--YOU'VE BEEN *INCOMMUNICADO* HERE FOR *DAYS*, REMEMBER?

ANYWAY-- NEXT, I MOVED ON TO *STAR CITY*...

"...WHERE, AT THE CITY *ZOO* IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, I SET A *TRAP* FOR A CERTAIN *EMERALD ARCHER!*

NOW TO TEACH A LESSON ABOUT "*THE SLINGS* AND *ARROWS* OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE"! *HO HO!*

MONKEY HOUSE

"OHH, BUT I HAD AN *OLD SCORE* TO SETTLE WITH HIM!*

*"A GOLD STAR FOR THE JOKER"--ISSUE #4--EDITOR

"I HAD FIRED AN *ARROW-FLARE*--A SIGNAL FOR SUMMONING *GREEN ARROW* THAT HADN'T BEEN USED IN *YEARS!*

"IF *THAT* WOULDN'T PIQUE HIS OVER-STIMULATED CURIOSITY --*NOTHING* WOULD!

"AND WITHIN THE HOUR..."

THAT FREAKY FLARE LOOKED LIKE IT CAME FROM THE CENTER OF THE ZOO!

AND THERE'S NOTHING SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GROUNDS BUT *THIS MONKEY-HOUSE*, SO--

LOOK--!

THESE *GUARDS*-- *DEAD*... WITH WEIRD GRINS FROZEN ON THEIR FACES!

OBVIOUSLY, SOMEONE DIDN'T WANT THEM TO FIND THIS *FLARE-GIZMO!*

IT'S... *GHASTLY!*

LOOKIT, CANARY-- A PLAYING CARD!

THE TELLTALE SIGN OF... *THE JOKER!*

WHAT'S *HE* DOIN' BACK IN *STAR CITY*?

SEE, THERE'S AN *ADDRESS* PRINTED ON THE BACK OF THE CARD! WORTH CHECKING OUT, NO?

RIDI SOUND STUDIOS

249 W. 29TH ST. 11TH FLOOR

"RIDI SOUND"--? OH, COME ON! "RIDI" IS *ITALIAN* FOR "*LAUGH*"!

IT'S *OBVIOUSLY* A TRAP!

YOU THINK I DON'T *KNOW* THAT?

THERE'S MORE TO MY HEAD THAN A BLONDE *WIG*, Y'KNOW!

RELAX--WITH MY *SONIC POWER*, I CAN HANDLE *MYSELF*!

YOU CHECK OUT THE ZOO!

CANARY, *WAIT*--! AWW, *NUTS*!

"WHAT THE COUPLE DIDN'T *REALIZE* IS THAT **I** WAS LURKING IN THE SHADOWS..."

HMM--A TRAIL OF *GREEN MAGNESIUM POWDER*--FROM THE *FLARE*, PROBABLY!

IT MIGHT LEAD SOME-WHERE--

"AND I WAS *HAPPY* TO *OBLIGE*...

JOKER--FREEZE!

"BUT WHAT THE ARCHER SPOTTED WAS **NOT** LITTLE MAD ME, BUT A *BALLOON* CONSTRUCTED IN MY *IMAGE*...

"...A BALLOON INFLATED WITH A MOST UNSTABLE GAS!"

KABOOM!

"AND WHEN THE *BUMBLING BOWMAN* NEXT OPENED HIS BABY-BLUES..."

:UNNH:... JOKER!

QUITE! NOTICE, ALSO, YOU ARE BEING MENACED BY A SLAVERING LAUGHING HYENA!

YEAH--AND THERE'S ONE *IN HERE, TOO!*

QUIET! I DO THE FUNNY STUFF HERE!

NOW, THEN... HYENAS ARE NORMALLY *DOCILE*--EXCEPT, OF COURSE, WHEN THEY'RE *HUNGRY!* AND POOR POOCHIE HASN'T EATEN IN *DAYS!*

ALSO, I'VE GIVEN HIM SOME OF MY *NERVE TOXIN*--HE'S STARK, RAVING *BANANAS!*

NOW *THERE'S* THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE *CRACKED!*

...I'M POSITIVELY *QUIVERING* WITH ANTICIPATION! *HA-HA-HA!*

TACKY, TACKY, *TACKY!* AH, WELL-- I DEARLY WISH I COULD STAY TO SEE THE *FUN...*

"QUIVERING"--?!?

HEY--THE LUNATIC *FORGOT* TO TAKE MY *WEAPONS!*

"POOR G.A.-- HE WAS SUCH A *SILLY!* HE REALLY *BELIEVED* THAT!..."

"...NEVER REALIZING THAT I DELIBERATELY LEFT HIM HIS PROPS--AND CHOSE MY WORDS TO CALL THAT FACT TO HIS *ATTENTION!*"

:WHEW!:

NOW I CAN TAKE OUT THAT BEAST WITH A *TRANQUILIZING ARROW* IN NOTHING FLAT!

"YOU SEE, I HAD TOYED WITH HIS *TOYS* WHILE HE WAS *UNCONSCIOUS*...

WHAT IN--?!

"I SIMPLY PLACED THE *HEAD* OF HIS *TRANQUILIZER ARROW* ON THE *SHAFT* OF HIS *BOOMERANG ARROW*! HA HA HA!

CHOKK

HA HAHA HAHAHA HA

"*MEANWHILE, BLACK CANARY* HAD MADE HER WAY TO THE ADDRESS ON MY CARD! IT *WAS* A RECORDING STUDIO -- *THAT* MUCH WAS *TRUE*... "

COME *IN*, PRETTY LADY--

--I HAVE A *SURPRISE* FOR YOU!

WELCOME TO *THE JOKER'S SOUND STUDIO!*

HEE-HEE-HEE!

THAT LAUGH YOU HEAR IS A *HYENA* I RECORDED AT THE *ZOO!*

YEEAA

YEEA

IT--IT'S *DEAFENING!*

HEE

OF *COURSE!* OUTRAGEOUSLY *NASTY*, AREN'T *I*?

OUTRAGEOUSLY *STUPID*, YOU MEAN--THE *WORST* I'LL END UP WITH IS A *HEADACHE!*

BECAUSE ONCE YOU GET BLITZED BY MY *SONIC "WHAMMY"*--

A LITTLE *LIGHT*--AND YOU CAN SEE YOU'RE IN AN *ECHO CHAMBER!*

WITH THE TURN OF A KNOB, I *INTENSIFY* YOUR "WHAMMY" A *HUNDREDFOLD*...

...AND BOUNCE IT RIGHT BACK AT YOU!...

...PRODUCING A SENSORY OVERLOAD THAT WILL "SHORT-CIRCUIT" THE AUDITORY NERVE CENTERS IN YOUR BRAIN!

TWEEEEEET

TWEEEEEET

IN SHORT--KILLING YOU! HA HA HA!

HA-HA-HA

"MEANWHILE, I WAS WATCHING AS THE STAR CITY POLICE--WHO'D BEEN SUMMONED BY THE SOUND OF MY EXPLODING BALLOON--RACED TO SAVE GREEN ARROW...

TALK ABOUT CLOSE CALLS! WE WERE JUST IN TIME!

"SURPRISE! THE BADGED BUFFOONS COULDN'T GUESS THAT THE JOKER HAD PLAYED HIS TRUMP CARD!

HOLY HANNAH! HE'S...DEAD!

"THERE WAS NO TRANQUILIZER IN THAT ARROW--I'D REPLACED IT WITH MY NERVE TOXIN! HA-HA-HA!"

NOW, WAIT! YOU COULDN'T BE IN TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME!

I WAS INDEED--THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT! HO-HO!

NOW BUTTON UP, AND PERMIT ME TO CONTINUE...

"MY NEXT STOP WAS NEW YORK CITY! AND AFTER MY NOCTURNAL WORK THERE WAS COMPLETED, A SHOCK GREETED EARLY MORNING VISITORS TO THE STATUE OF LIBERTY..."

GREAT SCOTT, MARTHA--LOOK!

LAND SAKES, FLOYD--H-HOW COULD THAT HAPPEN?!

"SOON MY LITTLE *MISCHIEF* PRODUCED THE DESIRED EFFECT--BRINGING A CERTAIN STAR-SPANGLED *HEROINE* TO THE SCENE..."

THE JOKER--?! WHAT AN *UNPLEASANT* SURPRISE!

VANDALISM, HUH?

"BEFORE *WONDER WOMAN* COULD GET HER *BEARINGS*..."

PERHAPS--BUT I'M HERE FOR SOMETHING *BIGGER*!

;UNNH; IF I WERE *OLD-FASHIONED*, I'D REMIND YOU IT'S CONSIDERED *GAUCHE* BY SOME TO STRIKE A "*LADY*"!

PETTY INSULTS LIKE THAT *NEVER* AFFECT ME...

...JUST AS I NEVER *RELY* ON VIOLENCE!

BUT IN THE CASE OF SCUM LIKE *YOU*, I'M *FORCED* TO MAKE AN *EXCEPTION*!

WHOK

THAT'S A LITTLE BENEATH A VETERAN *KILLER* LIKE YOURSELF, ISN'T IT?

REALLY? IF I EVER *MEET* A LADY, I'LL REMEMBER THAT!

THANKS FOR BEING SLIGHTLY *CLUMSY* TODAY, *JOKER!*

YOU GAVE ME A CHANCE TO SNARE YOU--

--WITH MY *MAGIC LASSO!*

AND NOW I *COMMAND* YOU--TELL ME THE *TRUTH!* WHAT IS YOUR *REAL* REASON FOR BEING HERE?

:SIGH: *SORRY,* DUMPLINGS-- I SIMPLY *LOATHE* YOUR GOLDEN ROPE!

YOU SEE, IT *CLASHES* WITH MY *SUIT!*

YOU DON'T MIND IF I *REMOVE* IT--?

WHAAT?! B-BUT YOU *CAN'T* DO THAT!

ANYONE BOUND BY THAT LASSO *MUST* TELL THE TRUTH!

NOT *ME!* COMMANDING A PERSON TO BE *TRUTHFUL* PRESUPPOSES THAT HE KNOWS THE *DIFFERENCE* BETWEEN TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD!

AND--SINCE I'M A BONA FIDE *SCHIZOPHRENIC*-- I'M *INCAPABLE* OF MAKING THAT *DISTINCTION! HA-HA-HA!*

SORRY TO TAKE UP YOUR TIME--I CAN SEE YOU'RE *ALL TIED UP! HA-HA-HO!*

THIS *CAN'T* BE HAPPENING--!

OH, AND *DO* BE CAREFUL--THERE'S A *BANANA PEEL* RIGHT *BEHIND* YOU!

NONSENSE! NOBODY *REALLY* SLIPS ON BANANA PEELS!

THEY DO ON *THAT* ONE--IT'S WAXED!

YAAAAH

SO--AS THEY USED TO SAY IN *VAUDEVILLE*--HAVE A NICE *TRIP!* HA-HA-HA!

"AND ONCE MORE--*THE JOKER TRIUMPHED!*

"OF COURSE, I *COULD* HAVE *COMMANDED* HER TO *JUMP*--BUT IT WAS MORE *FUN* MY WAY! HA, HA, HA!

AND *THEN* I KILLED--

OKAY! I GET THE IDEA! BUT GET TO YOUR PROBLEM--

YOU SAID THEY'RE DEAD--BUT *NOT* DEAD! WHAT DOES THAT *MEAN?*

SEE THAT DOOR? *BEYOND* IT LIE THE BODIES OF THE *JUSTICE LEAGUERS* I'VE KILLED!

THEY'RE ALL HOOKED UP TO *ELECTRO-ENCEPHALOGRAMS!*

"YESTERDAY, I DISCOVERED,,,"

WHAT?! THE *EEG'S* SHOW *BRAIN WAVES!*

BUT *HOW*--? THEY'RE CLINICALLY *DEAD*--NO *PULSE*, NO *BREATHING!*

AND YET, AS LONG AS THE BRAIN WAVES AREN'T *FLAT*, TECHNICALLY THEY'RE STILL *ALIVE!*

SO--*SOMEHOW*--THEY'RE...WELL, "99 AND 99/100% *DEAD*"!

SAY--WOULDN'T THAT MAKE A GREAT TITLE FOR A *STORY?*

THAT'S THE MOST *RIDICULOUS* THING I'VE EVER HEARD--I'VE HAD *ENOUGH!*

YOU'RE CERTIFIABLY *INSANE*--I CAN'T BELIEVE *ANYTHING* YOU SAY!

YOU *FORGET*, DOCTOR-- YOU'RE IN *MY* DOMAIN NOW... AND WE PLAY BY *MY RULES!*

SO YOUR COMPANY HAS TURNED *SOUR*, HAS IT? THEN I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO *LEAVE!*

A...A *GUN?*

NO--A *WATER PISTOL*-- BUT NOT YOUR *AVERAGE* WATER-PISTOL...

--AN *IMPROVEMENT* OF MY *OWN* DESIGN!

SPOOSH

CONFUSED, DOCTOR? WHAT I'VE DONE WILL BECOME... *PAINFULLY* CLEAR SHORTLY!

THAT *STRAIT-JACKET* YOU'RE WEARING IS MADE OF *RAWHIDE*-- WHICH *SHRINKS* DRAMATICALLY WHEN *WET!*

AND AS IT SHRINKS, YOUR ARMS WILL BE *PULLED TIGHT* ACROSS YOUR *RIB-CAGE*...

...SQUEEZING YOUR *DIAPHRAGM*-- *CRUSHING* THE LIFE FROM YOU!

A *FITTING* WAY FOR A *PSYCHIATRIST* TO *DIE*, EH, DOCTOR?

IMAGINE-- A "*SHRINK*"... GETTING *SHRUNK!*

HA HA HA

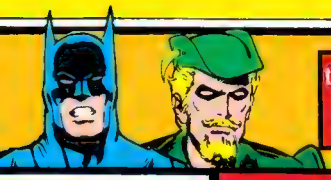
A PITY YOU CAN'T STAY FOR THE *REST* OF MY STORY... BECAUSE IT INVOLVES A RATHER *INTERESTING* GENTLEMAN...

...MY FATHER!

SO HERE WE ARE, WITH MORE LOOSE ENDS THAN A *SPAGHETTI* FACTORY HIT BY A *TORNADO!*

FOR THE ANSWERS TO SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS--AND A FEW *NEW* ONES-- DON'T MISS NEXT ISSUE'S...

"OH, DAD-- POOR DAD! THE JOKER'S HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET AND HE'S LAUGHING LIKE MAD!"



the BRAVE and the BOLD

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

BATMAN AND GREEN ARROW

NO. 129
SEPT.
30440

the BRAVE and the BOLD

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

PRESENTS

BATMAN AND GREEN ARROW

CO-STARRING
THE ATOM
THE JOKER
TWO-FACE

BATMAN BET GREEN ARROW'S LIFE, HE COULD PIERCE THE RING...

...WHEN HE MISSES, HIS PAL DIES! HA HA

BATMAN-
GREEN ARROW, THE ATOM
BATMAN HASN'T A CHANCE OF SPEARING THAT RING... AND WHEN HE MISSES...
...HE LOSES HIS BET... AND HIS FRIEND GREEN ARROW DIES!
STORY
BOB HANEY
ART
JIM APARO
THE MOTIVES THAT DRIVE MEN TO GLORY--OR DEFEAT--ARE MANY AND COMPLEX. THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE MAN'S OBSESSION WITH A GRIM, IRON BIRD WHOSE DARK AND SINISTER LEGACY ENTANGLES THE BATMAN, GREEN ARROW, AND THE ATOM IN A DEATH STRUGGLE WITH THEIR ARCH-FOES, THE JOKER AND TWO-FACE, AS ALL ARE CAUGHT IN...
THE CLAWS OF THE EMPEROR EAGLE

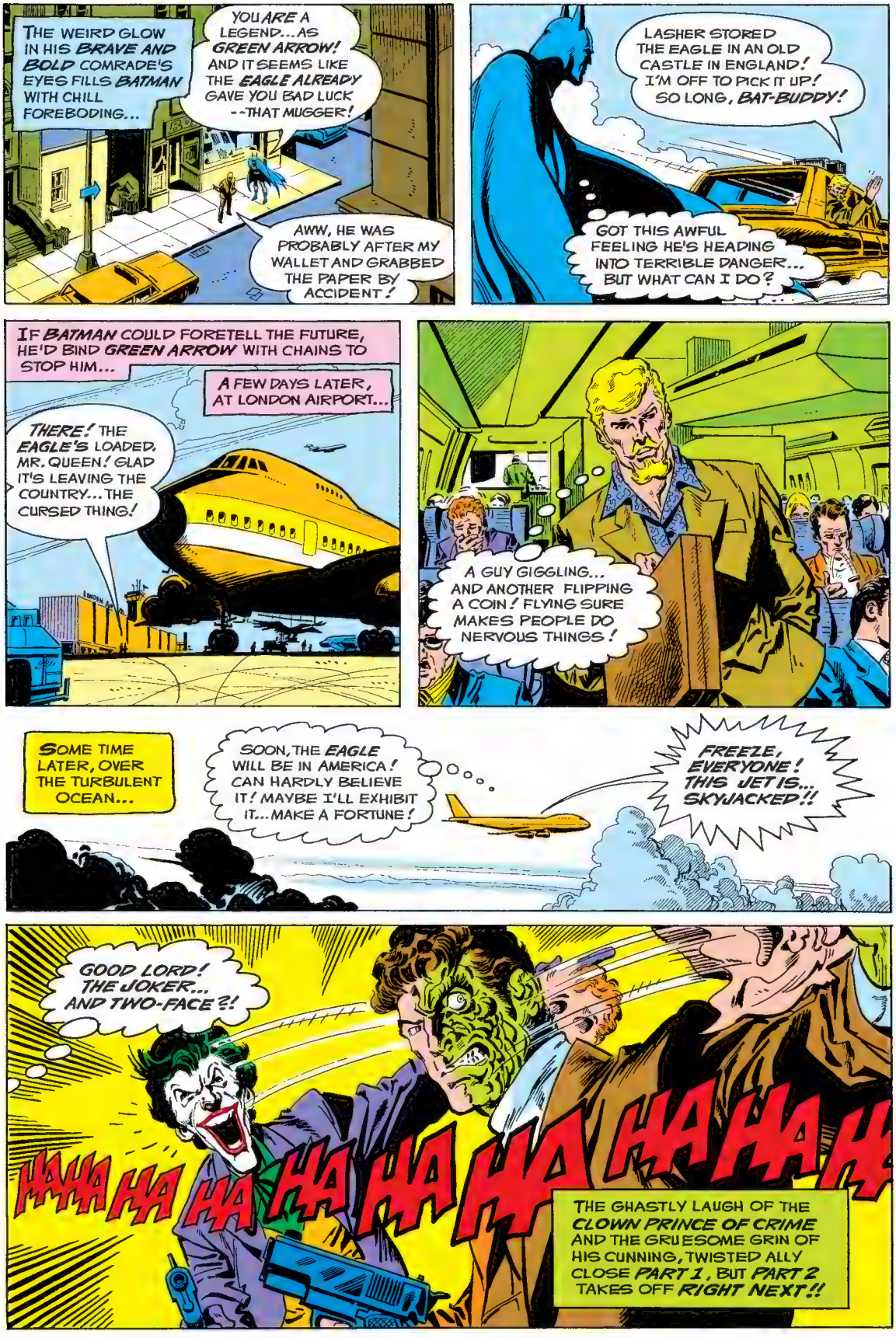
PART 1 CURSE OF THE BLACK BIRD

DOWN DARK STREETS THE BEARDED GIANT, WHO IS ALSO GREEN ARROW, WALKS... AS OUT OF THE NIGHT--SAVAGE ASSAULT!

THE BIG MAN RACES AFTER HIS ATTACKER ...WHEN SUDDENLY!
KLEIN
HOLD IT, FELLA!
OLIVER QUEEN--?
WHY, YOU--!
BATMAN--?
WHAT IN BLAZES--? I MISTOOK YOU FOR A MUGGER!
YEAH, WHILE THE GOON WHO TRIED TO MUG ME HAS GOTTEN CLEAN AWAY!
HE PICKED THE WRONG PIGEON! BESIDES BEING TOUGH, I HEARD YOU WERE DOWN TO YOUR LAST BOW AND ARROW!
I WAS BROKE, BUT I MADE A COOL MILLION ON A MINING DEAL AND SANK IT INTO THIS SHEET OF PAPER ...WHICH MY ATTACKER SEEMED TO BE AFTER!
WHAT IS IT... A SECRET LIST OF GORGEOUS FEMALES AND THEIR PHONE NUMBERS?
EVEN BETTER, OLD BUDDY! IT'S A BILL OF SALE GIVING ME OWNERSHIP OF ONE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST RELICS --THE EMPEROR EAGLE!!
THE EMPEROR EAGLE? I'VE HEARD OF IT--!
WHO HASN'T? DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES, THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL MEN HAVE OWNED IT... AND TRIED TO BEAT ITS DEADLY CURSE...
GOTHAM CITY NEWS
...INCLUDING VICTOR LASHER, WHO WAS A USED-UP BANKRUPT AT THE END! MY MILLION BUCKS WILL HELP HIS HEIRS!
THINK OF IT-- I, OLIVER QUEEN, POSSESSING THE--EMPEROR EAGLE!!
VICTOR LASHER DIES! TYCOON EXPIRES AT EAGLE'S NEST ESTATE

" IT ALL BEGAN OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO, WHEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT HAD CONQUERED MOST OF THE KNOWN WORLD..."
ON TO INDIA... THEN ALL THE WORLD IS MINE!
FORWARD, BUCEPHALUS!
FOLLOW ALEXANDER! HE IS... A GOD!!
" IN THE CITY OF PATHAN, ALEXANDER'S APPROACH BROUGHT TERROR..."
HE WILL STRIP US OF ALL OUR WEALTH! YET WE DARE NOT OPPOSE HIM!
WAIT! I HAVE A PLAN FOR SAVING OUR RICHES ...AND YET NOT AROUSE HIS ANGER!
" FOR MANY DAYS AND NIGHTS, THE IRON-MAKERS OF PATHAN WORKED LIKE DEVILS!"
OUR WEALTH IS HIDDEN WHERE ALEXANDER WILL NEVER FIND IT--AND OUR "GIFT" IS READY!
MIGHTY ALEXANDER! WE ARE POOR PEOPLE! ALL WE CAN OFFER YOU IS THIS CRUDE IRON BIRD... MUCH TOO UNWORTHY OF YOUR GLORIOUS SELF!
"BUT, SURPRISINGLY, HE ACCEPTED THE EAGLE, AND HAD IT DRAGGED AT THE HEAD OF HIS ARMY. BUT BEFORE HE REACHED INDIA..."
OUR GREAT ALEXANDER IS ...DYING!
THE WORLD... I WILL RULE IT ALL...
CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

"SOME SAID THE EAGLE HAD BROUGHT ALEXANDER AN EARLY DEATH! THAT WAS THE START OF ITS LEGENDARY CURSE! OTHER CONQUERORS OWNED IT...ONLY TO MEET QUICK DEFEAT!"
"EVERYONE WHO POSSESSED THE BIG, BLACK BIRD SEEMED TO MEET MISFORTUNE..."
SIGNOR! YOUR ENTIRE TREASURE FLEET WAS CAPTURED BY TURKISH PIRATES!
I AM... RUINED!
"CENTURIES PASSED! STILL THE CURSE FOLLOWED THE EAGLE FROM OWNER TO OWNER--EVEN THE GREAT NAPOLEON..."
SIRE! THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO... IS LOST!
THE EAGLE... I SHOULD NEVER HAVE POSSESSED IT!
"OTHERS CHALLENGED THE CURSE! A FAMED ARCHAEOLOGIST BOUGHT IT, AND WITHIN A SHORT TIME..."
DOCTOR ABERCROMBIE--?
MY GOD... HE'S DEAD!!
AFTER THAT, FAMOUS EXPLORERS...INVENTORS... NO MATTER WHO POSSESSED THE EAGLE--THEIR LUCK TURNED SOUR!
THE LAST BIG LOSER TO OWN IT BEFORE VICTOR LASHER WAS-- ADOLF HITLER!
THEN, WHY IN BLAZES DID YOU BUY IT?
TO OWN THE THING THAT'S DEFEATED HISTORY'S IMPORTANT MEN-- WHAT A TRIUMPH IF I CAN BEAT THE CURSE! WHY, I'LL BECOME A LEGEND!


THE WEIRD GLOW IN HIS BRAVE AND BOLD COMRADE'S EYES FILLS BATMAN WITH CHILL FOREBODING...
YOU ARE A LEGEND...AS GREEN ARROW! AND IT SEEMS LIKE THE EAGLE ALREADY GAVE YOU BAD LUCK --THAT MUGGER!
AWW, HE WAS PROBABLY AFTER MY WALLET AND GRABBED THE PAPER BY ACCIDENT!
LASHER STORED THE EAGLE IN AN OLD CASTLE IN ENGLAND! I'M OFF TO PICK IT UP! SO LONG, BAT-BUDDY!
GOT THIS AWFUL FEELING HE'S HEADING INTO TERRIBLE DANGER... BUT WHAT CAN I DO?
IF BATMAN COULD FORETELL THE FUTURE, HE'D BIND GREEN ARROW WITH CHAINS TO STOP HIM...
A FEW DAYS LATER, AT LONDON AIRPORT...
THERE! THE EAGLE'S LOADED, MR. QUEEN! GLAD IT'S LEAVING THE COUNTRY... THE CURSED THING!
A GUY GIGGLING... AND ANOTHER FLIPPING A COIN! FLYING SURE MAKES PEOPLE DO NERVOUS THINGS!
SOME TIME LATER, OVER THE TURBULENT OCEAN...
SOON, THE EAGLE WILL BE IN AMERICA! CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! MAYBE I'LL EXHIBIT IT...MAKE A FORTUNE!
FREEZE, EVERYONE! THIS JET IS... SKYJACKED!!
GOOD LORD! THE JOKER... AND TWO-FACE?!
HAHA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA H
THE GHASTLY LAUGH OF THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME AND THE GRUESOME GRIN OF HIS CUNNING, TWISTED ALLY CLOSE PART 1, BUT PART 2 TAKES OFF RIGHT NEXT!!

PART 2 FLIGHT 311 IS SKYJACKED

AS THE BIZARRE BATTLE CONTINUES...
TWO-FACE TO TANKER! NEED HELP...FAST!
FROM A BIG-BELLIED REFUELING PLANE THAT HAS APPEARED SEEMINGLY FROM NOWHERE, A METAL POD SLAMS AGAINST THE JET'S ENTRY HATCH...
BLANG
POWERFUL AIRTIGHT MAGNETS HOLD THE POD IN PLACE AS...
JOKER'S PINNED BY GREEN ARROW!
GET HIM!!
THE NEXT MOMENT...
AND AS THE BOLD BOWMAN SLUMPS UNCONSCIOUS...
REDUCE SPEED, FLYBOY...OR I'LL BLAST YOU! WE MUST TAKE ON EXTRA FUEL TO REACH OUR NEW DESTINATION!
NOW, AS THE BIG TANKER MANEUVERS INTO POSITION ABOVE THE SLOWED AIRLINER...
JOKER CALLING GOTHAM CITY AIRPORT!
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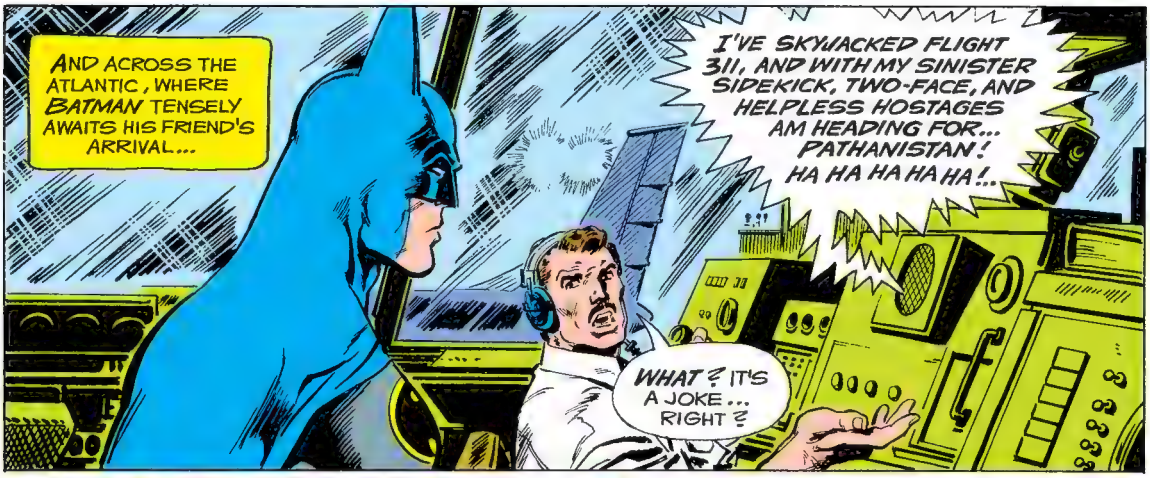
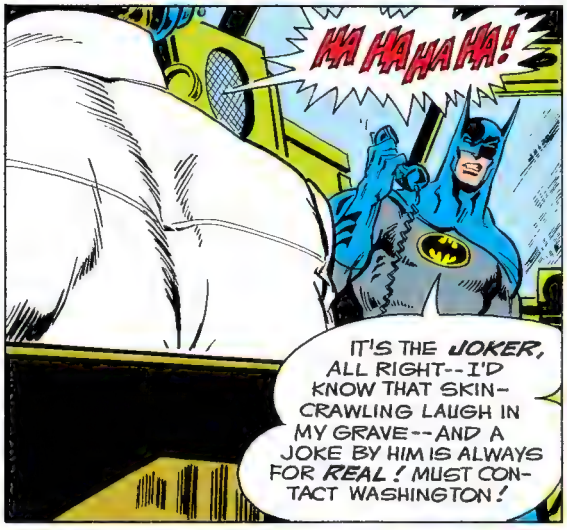
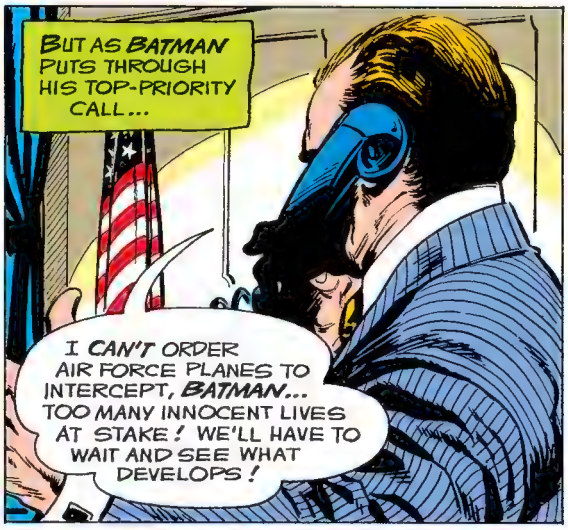

AND ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, WHERE BATMAN TENSELY AWAITS HIS FRIEND'S ARRIVAL...
I'VE SKYJACKED FLIGHT 311, AND WITH MY SINISTER SIDEKICK, TWO-FACE, AND HELPLESS HOSTAGES AM HEADING FOR... PATHANISTAN! HA HA HA HA HA!..
WHAT? IT'S A JOKE... RIGHT?


HA HA HA HA!
IT'S THE JOKER, ALL RIGHT--I'D KNOW THAT SKIN-CRAWLING LAUGH IN MY GRAVE--AND A JOKE BY HIM IS ALWAYS FOR REAL! MUST CONTACT WASHINGTON!


BUT AS BATMAN PUTS THROUGH HIS TOP-PRIORITY CALL...
I CAN'T ORDER AIR FORCE PLANES TO INTERCEPT, BATMAN... TOO MANY INNOCENT LIVES AT STAKE! WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT DEVELOPS!

THE CAPED CRUSADER HAS FACED SKYJACKERS BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT--VERY DIFFERENT!
MY TWO GREATEST FOES, JOKER AND TWO-FACE, TAKING A JET-LOAD OF HOSTAGES, INCLUDING OLIVER QUEEN, TO PATHANISTAN!
THAT'S THE PLACE THE EMPEROR EAGLE CAME FROM... LONG AGO!

SO RIGHT, BATMAN! MEANTIME, ABOARD THE REFUELED JET...
NEATLY DONE, TWO-FACE! WE'RE A GREAT TEAM!
THE MAIN SCHEME WAS YOUR IDEA, GHASTLY, BUT 'TWAS MY FATEFUL COIN THAT TOLD US IT WAS RIGHT TO GO AHEAD!

GOOD SIDE, EVIL MUST HIDE! MARRED SIDE, WOE BETIDE!
SEE? THE MARRED SIDE'S STILL COMING UP--THUS DECIDING IT'S OKAY TO CONTINUE OUR FABULOUS CAPER!

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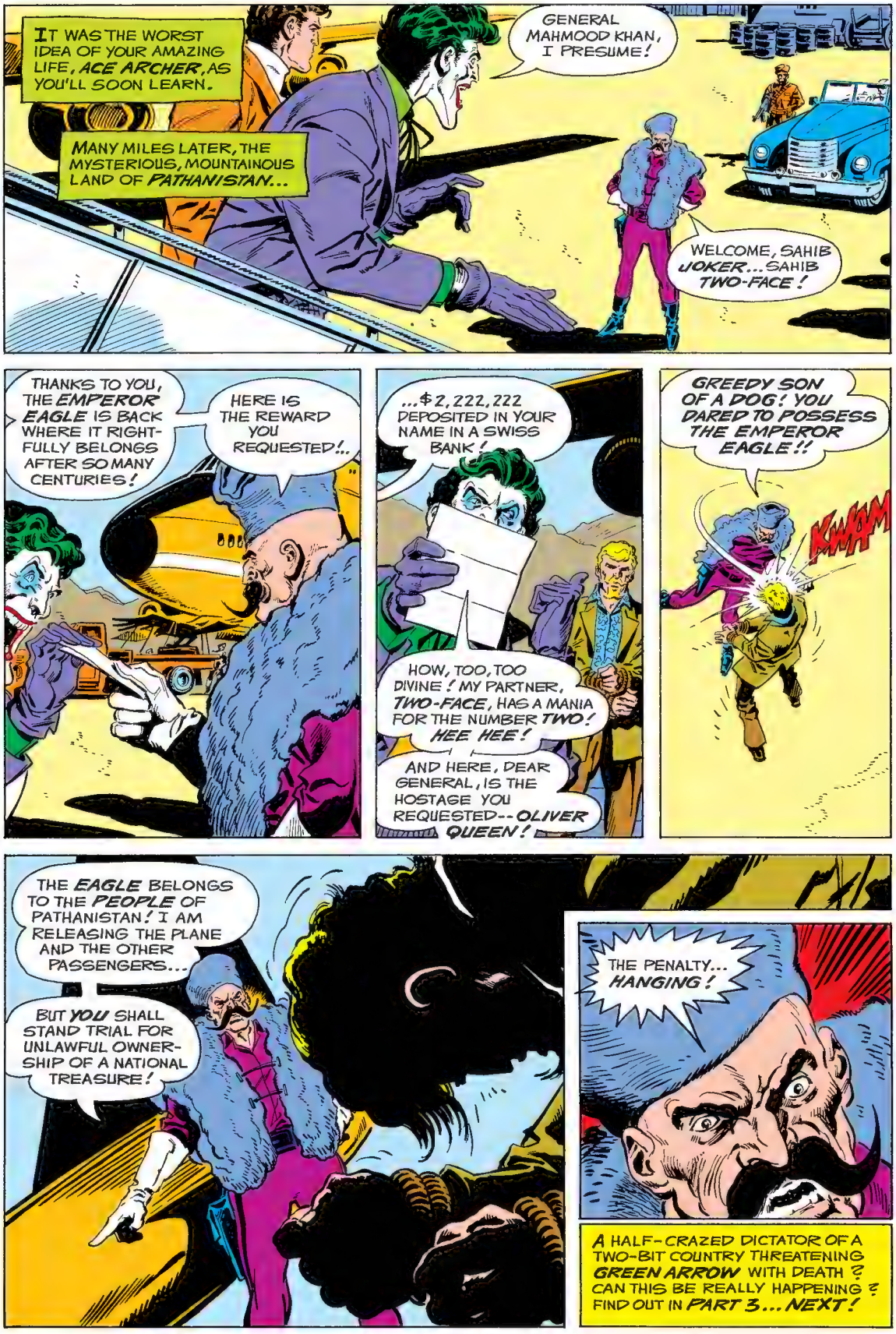
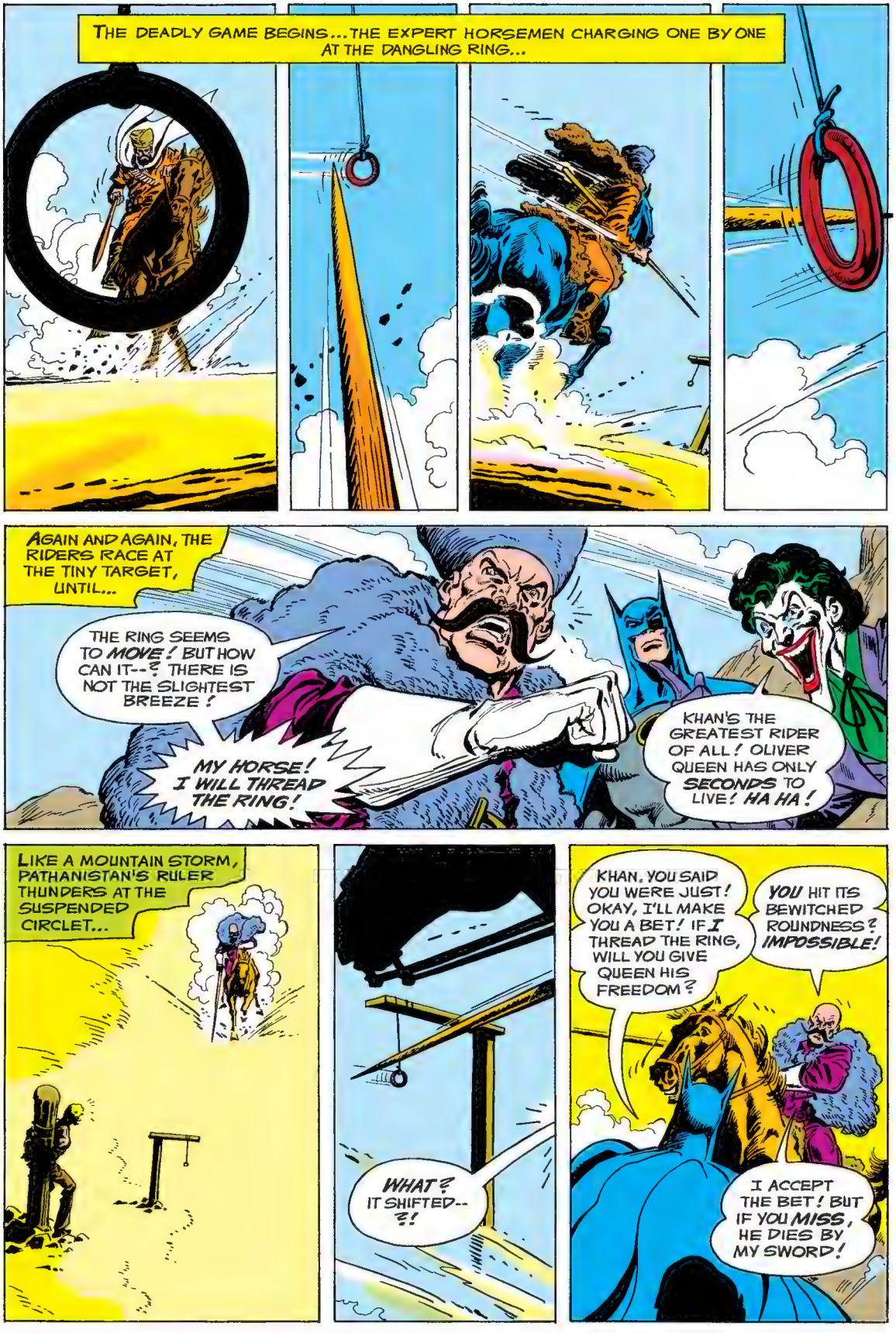
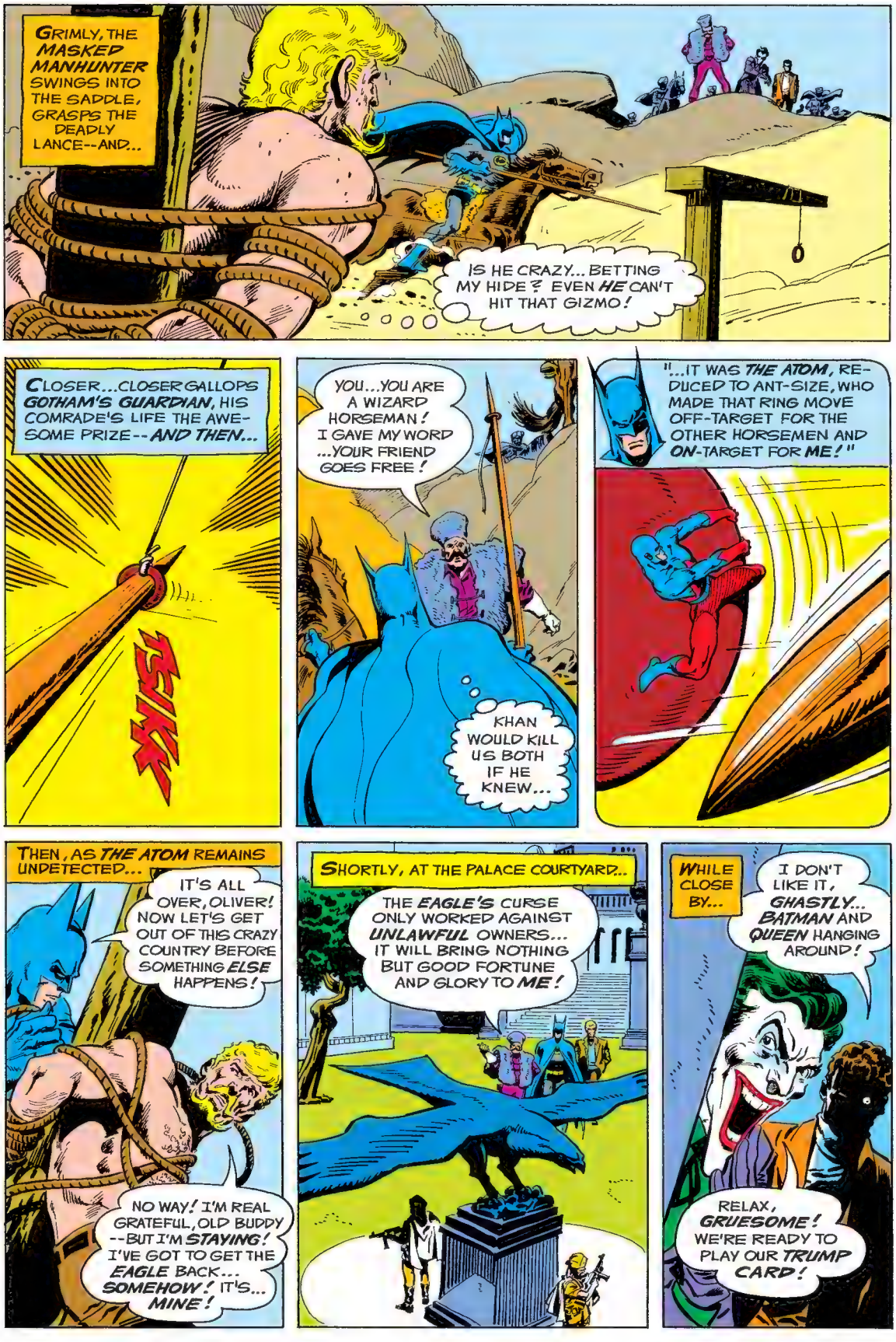

IT WAS THE WORST IDEA OF YOUR AMAZING LIFE, ACE ARCHER, AS YOU'LL SOON LEARN.
MANY MILES LATER, THE MYSTERIOUS, MOUNTAINOUS LAND OF PATHANISTAN...
GENERAL MAHMOOD KHAN, I PRESUME!
WELCOME, SAHIB JOKER... SAHIB TWO-FACE!
THANKS TO YOU, THE EMPEROR EAGLE IS BACK WHERE IT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS AFTER SO MANY CENTURIES!
HERE IS THE REWARD YOU REQUESTED!..
...$2,222,222 DEPOSITED IN YOUR NAME IN A SWISS BANK!
HOW, TOO, TOO DIVINE! MY PARTNER, TWO-FACE, HAS A MANIA FOR THE NUMBER TWO! HEE HEE!
AND HERE, DEAR GENERAL, IS THE HOSTAGE YOU REQUESTED--OLIVER QUEEN!
GREEDY SON OF A DOG! YOU DARED TO POSSESS THE EMPEROR EAGLE!!
KWAM
THE EAGLE BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF PATHANISTAN! I AM RELEASING THE PLANE AND THE OTHER PASSENGERS...
BUT YOU SHALL STAND TRIAL FOR UNLAWFUL OWNERSHIP OF A NATIONAL TREASURE!
THE PENALTY... HANGING!
A HALF-CRAZED DICTATOR OF A TWO-BIT COUNTRY THREATENING GREEN ARROW WITH DEATH? CAN THIS BE REALLY HAPPENING? FIND OUT IN PART 3... NEXT!

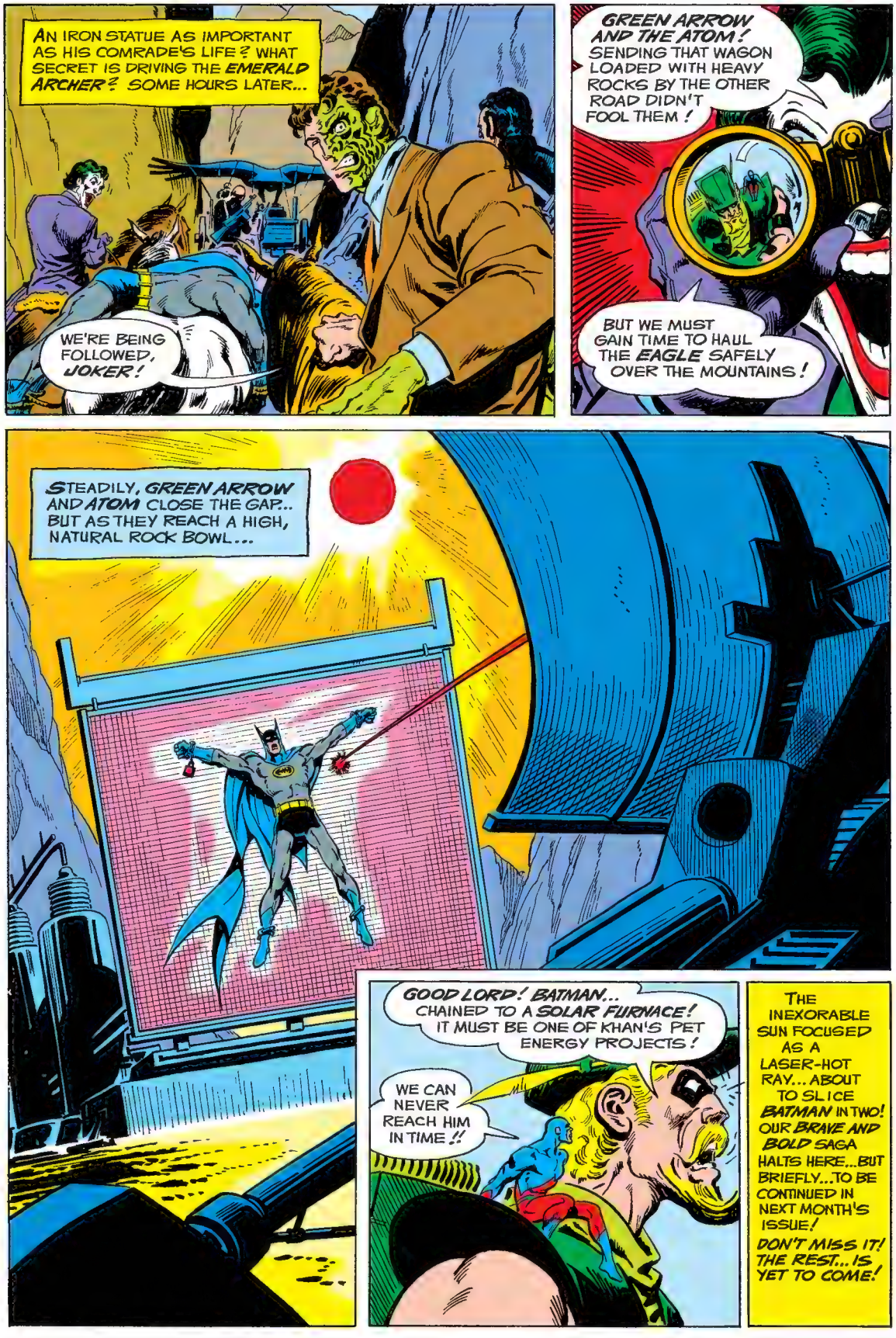
PART 3
THE SOLAR TRAP
GOTHAM POLICE
SOON, AS THE SHOCKING NEWS BREAKS ON THE WORLD...
OLIVER QUEEN'S TRIAL STARTS TOMORROW IN PATHANISTAN, BATMAN!
YOUR PAL'S IN BIG TROUBLE!
WHAT'S THE STORY??
NO COMMENT, BOYS!
I NEED HELP TO HELP GREEN ARROW... SOMEONE WHO CAN OPERATE UNDETECTED INSIDE PATHANISTAN...
...AND I KNOW JUST THE GUY!
THAT NIGHT, PLUMMETING FROM A HIGH-FLYING PLANE...
ONCE WE LAND, ATOM, I'M REMINDING YOU THAT I WANT YOU TO STAY STRICTLY OUT OF SIGHT!
SAID AND DONE, BATMAN! I'LL JUST SHRINK DOWN TO FLEA SIZE AND AWAIT ORDERS!
NEXT DAY, A BIZARRE TRIAL BEGINS! AS PROSECUTOR, A BRILLIANT FORMER DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONE MAD--TWO-FACE!
OBSERVE, GENTLEMEN OF THE WORLD PRESS, A BILL OF SALE FOR THE EMPEROR EAGLE FOUND IN THE DEFENDANT'S LUGGAGE!
THAT MUGGER BACK IN GOTHAM CITY... THAT'S WHAT HE WAS REALLY AFTER!
AS ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENSE --THE JOKER!
MY HUMBLE CLIENT PLEADS... NOLO CONTENDERE! FOR YOU NUMBSKULLS WHO DON'T DIG LATIN, IT MEANS NO DEFENSE!
GUILTY! HEE HEE HEE!
CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

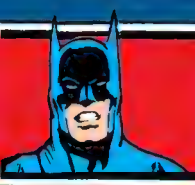
JUDGE AND JURY? A POWER-HUNGRY DICTATOR--GENERAL KHAN!
OLIVER QUEEN, YOU ARE GUILTY OF UNLAWFULLY OWNING A PATHANISTAN NATIONAL TREASURE!
THE SENTENCE IS--
STOP!
STOP THIS MOCKERY OF JUSTICE!!
BATMAN--?!
GENERAL KHAN! YOU HAVE THE EAGLE BACK! IF YOU EXECUTE HIM, YOU WILL BE CALLED A BARBARIAN TYRANT!
I WILL SHOW THE WORLD I AM A JUST RULER! HE SHALL HAVE A SPORTING CHANCE ... FOR HIS LIFE!
SHORTLY, ON A FIELD OUTSIDE THE CITY...
MY HORSEMEN, THE WORLD'S BEST, WILL RIDE ONE BY ONE AT FULL GALLOP...
...AND THE FIRST TO THREAD THAT RING WITH HIS LANCE WINS THE PRIVILEGE OF HURLING ITS RAZOR-SHARP POINT INTO THE GUILTY ONE!
WHAT? THAT'S EVEN MORE BARBARIC!
WHAT'S WRONG, CAPED CRUSADER? DON'T YOU LIKE SPORTING EVENTS?
YOU SCUM, I'LL--
COOL IT, BIG MAN! REMEMBER THE JOKER AND I ARE HONORED GUESTS IN THIS FLEA-BAG COUNTRY!
RIDERS... READY!!


THE DEADLY GAME BEGINS...THE EXPERT HORSEMEN CHARGING ONE BY ONE AT THE DANGLING RING...
AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE RIDERS RACE AT THE TINY TARGET, UNTIL...
THE RING SEEMS TO MOVE! BUT HOW CAN IT--? THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST BREEZE!
MY HORSE! I WILL THREAD THE RING!
KHAN'S THE GREATEST RIDER OF ALL! OLIVER QUEEN HAS ONLY SECONDS TO LIVE! HA HA!
LIKE A MOUNTAIN STORM, PATHANISTAN'S RULER THUNDERS AT THE SUSPENDED CIRCLET...
WHAT? IT SHIFTED--?!
KHAN, YOU SAID YOU WERE JUST! OKAY, I'LL MAKE YOU A BET! IF I THREAD THE RING, WILL YOU GIVE QUEEN HIS FREEDOM?
YOU HIT ITS BEWITCHED ROUNDNESS? IMPOSSIBLE!
I ACCEPT THE BET! BUT IF YOU MISS, HE DIES BY MY SWORD!


GRIMLY, THE MASKED MANHUNTER SWINGS INTO THE SADDLE, GRASPS THE DEADLY LANCE--AND...
IS HE CRAZY... BETTING MY HIDE? EVEN HE CAN'T HIT THAT GIZMO!
CLOSER...CLOSER GALLOPS GOTHAM'S GUARDIAN, HIS COMRADE'S LIFE THE AWESOME PRIZE--AND THEN...
YOU...YOU ARE A WIZARD HORSEMAN! I GAVE MY WORD ...YOUR FRIEND GOES FREE!
KHAN WOULD KILL US BOTH IF HE KNEW...
"...IT WAS THE ATOM, REDUCED TO ANT-SIZE, WHO MADE THAT RING MOVE OFF-TARGET FOR THE OTHER HORSEMEN AND ON-TARGET FOR ME!"
THEN, AS THE ATOM REMAINS UNDETECTED...
IT'S ALL OVER, OLIVER! NOW LET'S GET OUT OF THIS CRAZY COUNTRY BEFORE SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS!
NO WAY! I'M REAL GRATEFUL, OLD BUDDY --BUT I'M STAYING! I'VE GOT TO GET THE EAGLE BACK... SOMEHOW! IT'S... MINE!
SHORTLY, AT THE PALACE COURTYARD...
THE EAGLE'S CURSE ONLY WORKED AGAINST UNLAWFUL OWNERS... IT WILL BRING NOTHING BUT GOOD FORTUNE AND GLORY TO ME!
WHILE CLOSE BY...
I DON'T LIKE IT, GHASTLY... BATMAN AND QUEEN HANGING AROUND!
RELAX, GRUESOME! WE'RE READY TO PLAY OUR TRUMP CARD!

LATER, THAT NIGHT...
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND OLIVER'S STRANGE OBSESSION ABOUT THE EAGLE! I HAD TO STAY IN CASE IT GETS HIM INTO FURTHER TROUBLE!
BUT WHEN BATMAN REACHES THE MOONLIT COURTYARD...
KA-TOK
HIGH IN THE HEAVENS RIDES THE MOON, AND WHEN DAWN BREAKS...
THOSE TWO HYENAS BEAT ME TO IT!
KHAN, YOU POMPOUS FOOL! WE'VE FLOWN THE COOP WITH THE EAGLE AND ONE HOSTAGE --THE BATMAN! JOKER & TWO-FACE
AFTER THEM! SOUND THE ALARM!
AS PATHANISTAN'S ENRAGED RULER LEADS A HOT PURSUIT...
DEEP, FRESH TRACKS... FROM THE EAGLE'S WEIGHT! RIDE ON!!
TWO OTHER HUNTERS TAKE UP THE CHASE...
KNOWING JOKER AND TWO-FACE, ATOM, I'LL BET THEY TOOK THIS ROCKY OLD CARAVAN ROUTE, SLOWER--BUT TOUGHER TO TRACK!
CHECK, ARROW! WE MUST RESCUE BATMAN...NO TELLING WHAT THAT PAIR MIGHT DO TO HIM!
JUST AS IMPORTANT, I'VE GOT TO GET THE EAGLE BACK--NO MATTER WHAT!
CONCLUDED ON FOLLOWING PAGE


AN IRON STATUE AS IMPORTANT AS HIS COMRADE'S LIFE? WHAT SECRET IS DRIVING THE EMERALD ARCHER? SOME HOURS LATER...
WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED, JOKER!
GREEN ARROW AND THE ATOM! SENDING THAT WAGON LOADED WITH HEAVY ROCKS BY THE OTHER ROAD DIDN'T FOOL THEM!
BUT WE MUST GAIN TIME TO HAUL THE EAGLE SAFELY OVER THE MOUNTAINS!
STEADILY, GREEN ARROW AND ATOM CLOSE THE GAP... BUT AS THEY REACH A HIGH, NATURAL ROCK BOWL...
GOOD LORD! BATMAN... CHAINED TO A SOLAR FURNACE! IT MUST BE ONE OF KHAN'S PET ENERGY PROJECTS!
WE CAN NEVER REACH HIM IN TIME!!
THE INEXORABLE SUN FOCUSED AS A LASER-HOT RAY... ABOUT TO SLICE BATMAN IN TWO! OUR BRAVE AND BOLD SAGA HALTS HERE...BUT BRIEFLY...TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE! DON'T MISS IT! THE REST... IS YET TO COME!



the BRAVE and the BOLD

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

BATMAN AND 4 FAMOUS CO-STARS

NO. 130
OCT.
30440

the BRAVE and the BOLD

PRESENTS

BATMAN AND 4 FAMOUS CO-STARS

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

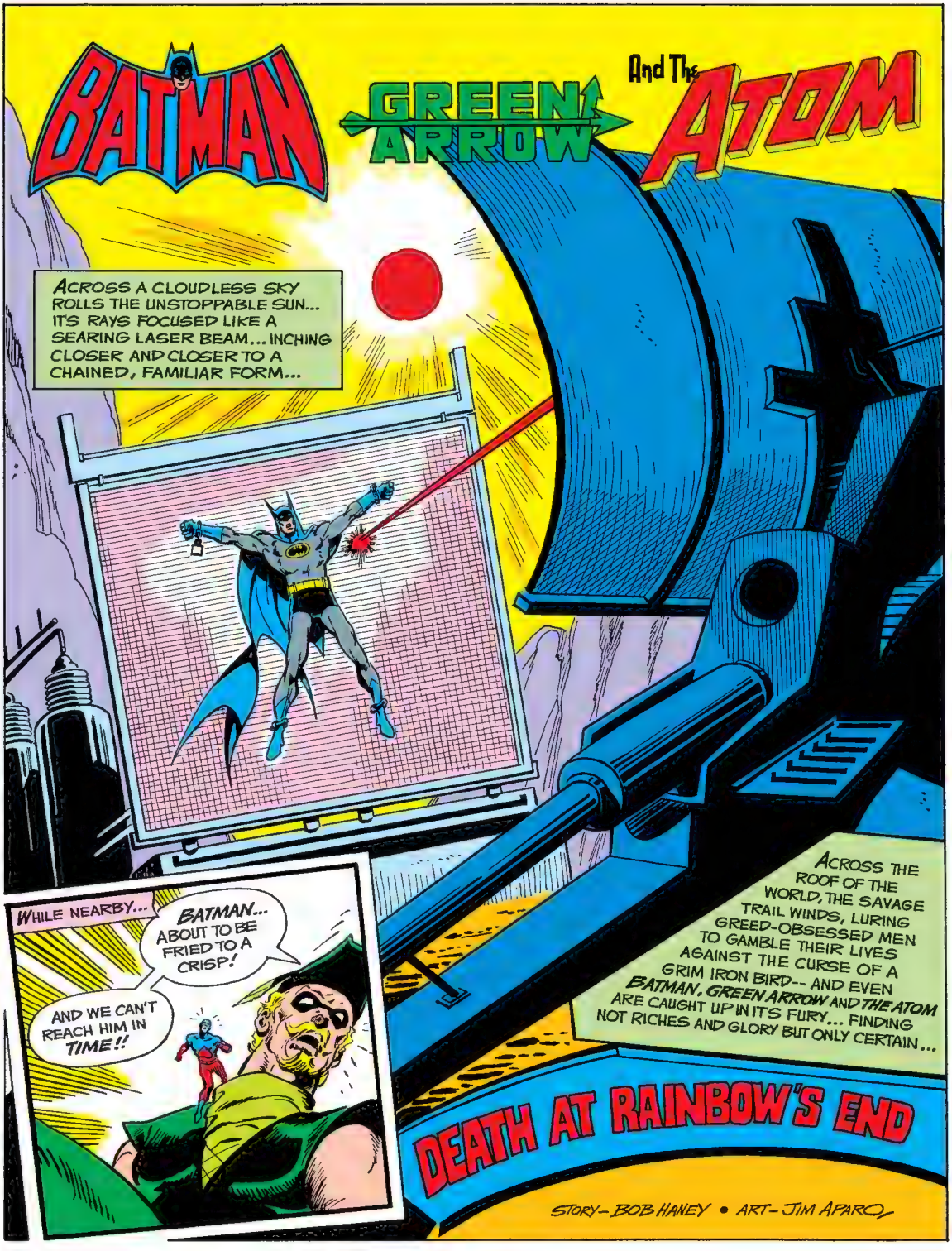
GREEN ARROW

THE ATOM

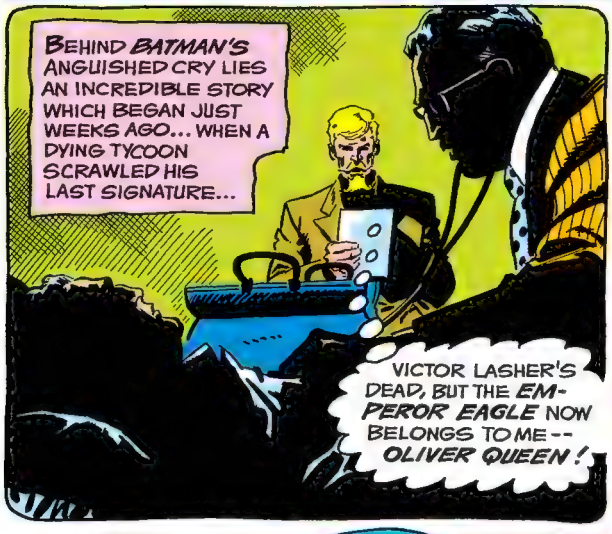
THE JOKER

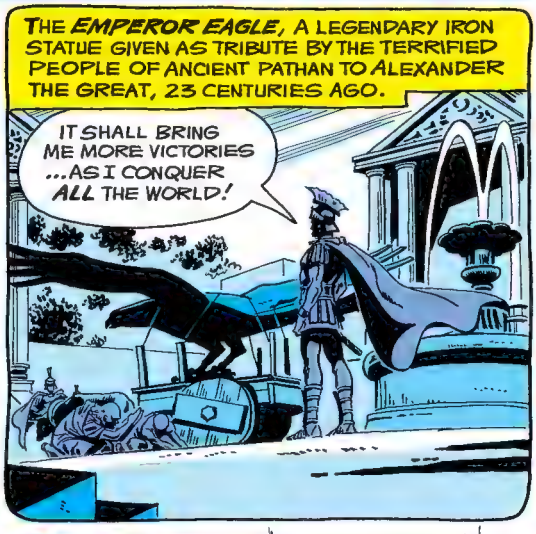
TWO-FACE

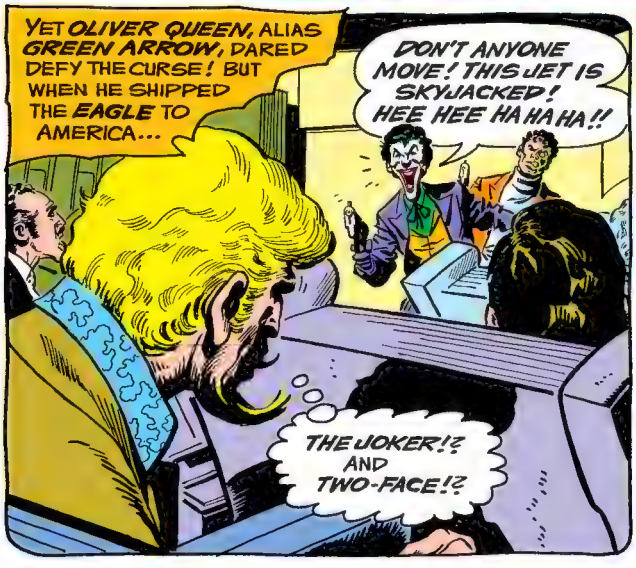
"DEATH AT RAINBOW'S END"

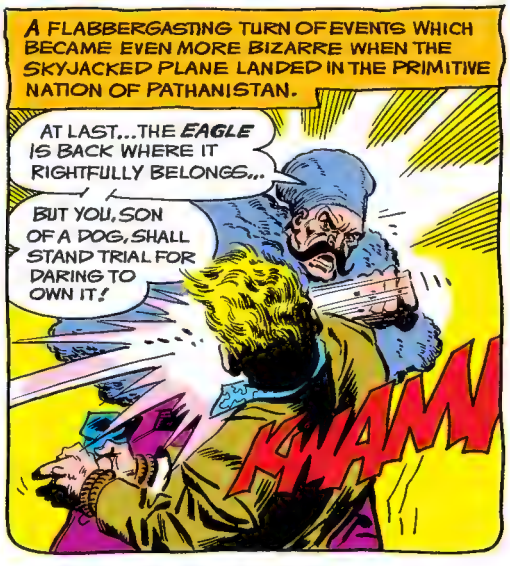

BATMAN
GREEN ARROW
And The ATOM
ACROSS A CLOUDLESS SKY ROLLS THE UNSTOPPABLE SUN... ITS RAYS FOCUSED LIKE A SEARING LASER BEAM... INCHING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO A CHAINED, FAMILIAR FORM...
WHILE NEARBY...
BATMAN... ABOUT TO BE FRIED TO A CRISP!
AND WE CAN'T REACH HIM IN TIME!!
ACROSS THE ROOF OF THE WORLD, THE SAVAGE TRAIL WINDS, LURING GREED-OBSESSED MEN TO GAMBLE THEIR LIVES AGAINST THE CURSE OF A GRIM IRON BIRD-- AND EVEN BATMAN, GREEN ARROW AND THE ATOM ARE CAUGHT UP IN ITS FURY... FINDING NOT RICHES AND GLORY BUT ONLY CERTAIN...
DEATH AT RAINBOW'S END
STORY- BOB HANEY • ART- JIM APARO

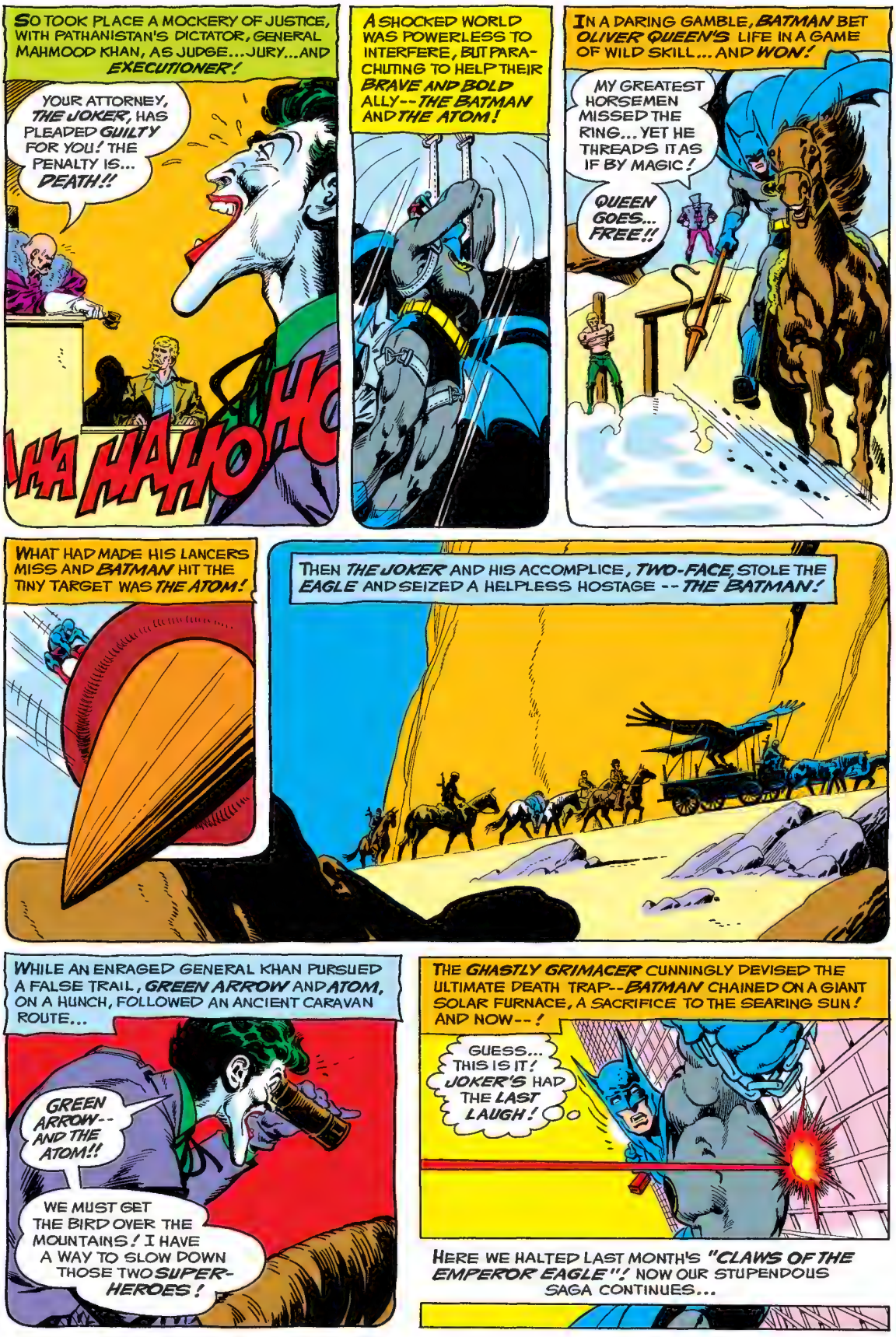
PART 1 - AMBUSHED BY THE GHASTLY GRIMACER









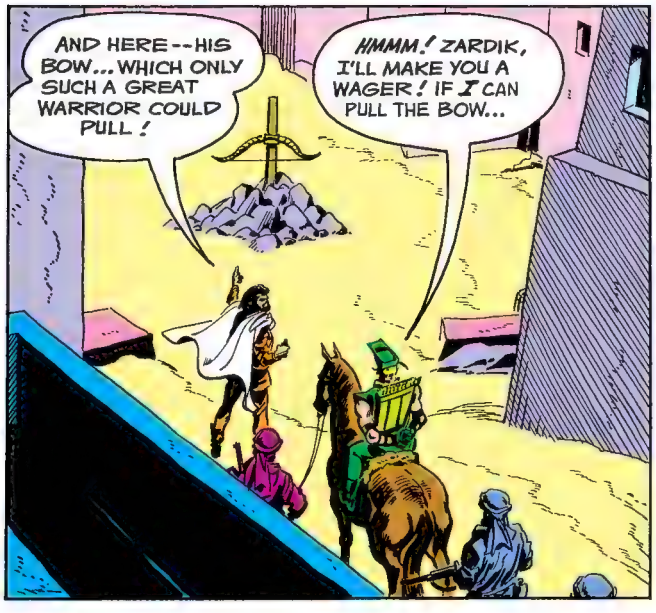

SO TOOK PLACE A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE, WITH PATHANISTAN'S DICTATOR, GENERAL MAHMOOD KHAN, AS JUDGE...JURY...AND EXECUTIONER!
YOUR ATTORNEY, THE JOKER, HAS PLEADED GUILTY FOR YOU! THE PENALTY IS... DEATH!!
HA HA HO HO
A SHOCKED WORLD WAS POWERLESS TO INTERFERE, BUT PARACHUTING TO HELP THEIR BRAVE AND BOLD ALLY--THE BATMAN AND THE ATOM!
IN A DARING GAMBLE, BATMAN BET OLIVER QUEEN'S LIFE IN A GAME OF WILD SKILL... AND WON!
MY GREATEST HORSEMEN MISSED THE RING... YET HE THREADS IT AS IF BY MAGIC!
QUEEN GOES... FREE!!
WHAT HAD MADE HIS LANCERS MISS AND BATMAN HIT THE TINY TARGET WAS THE ATOM!
THEN THE JOKER AND HIS ACCOMPLICE, TWO-FACE, STOLE THE EAGLE AND SEIZED A HELPLESS HOSTAGE -- THE BATMAN!
WHILE AN ENRAGED GENERAL KHAN PURSUED A FALSE TRAIL, GREEN ARROW AND ATOM, ON A HUNCH, FOLLOWED AN ANCIENT CARAVAN ROUTE...
GREEN ARROW-- AND THE ATOM!!
WE MUST GET THE BIRD OVER THE MOUNTAINS! I HAVE A WAY TO SLOW DOWN THOSE TWO SUPER-HEROES!
THE GHASTLY GRIMACER CUNNINGLY DEVISED THE ULTIMATE DEATH TRAP--BATMAN CHAINED ON A GIANT SOLAR FURNACE, A SACRIFICE TO THE SEARING SUN! AND NOW--!
GUESS... THIS IS IT! JOKER'S HAD THE LAST LAUGH!
HERE WE HALTED LAST MONTH'S "CLAWS OF THE EMPEROR EAGLE"! NOW OUR STUPENDOUS SAGA CONTINUES...

AT THIS VERY MOMENT...
NO TIME TO CLIMB UP THERE AND FREE HIM... THIS HAS TO WORK, ATOM!
FIRE, G.A.!
FIRE!!
UP... UP... ARCS THE SHAFT AND ITS TINY HUMAN TIP.....
AND...!
ZUUK
WITHIN THE LOCK, THE MIGHTY MITE SHOVES AGAINST ITS TUMBLERS...
THE NEXT INSTANT, LOCK AND CHAINS FALL AWAY... AS...
OFF THE HOT SPOT JUST IN TIME!
WHRAAM
JOKER'S LITTLE ADDED TOUCH--A BOOBY TRAP IF THAT GIANT FRYING PAN DIDN'T MAKE ME DEAD ENOUGH!
IT SURE WRECKED KHAN'S PLAN FOR GIVING HIS PEOPLE MODERN SOLAR POWER!
ANOTHER SCORE FOR KHAN TO SETTLE WITH JOKER AND TWO-FACE WHILE WE VAMOOSE FROM THIS CRAZY COUNTRY!
NOT I! YOU SAVED MY LIFE, NOW WE'RE EVEN! I'M GOING AFTER THE EAGLE! IT'S MINE AND NOTHING WILL STOP ME!
CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

I'VE COME THIS FAR... GUESS I'LL HANG IN!
WHY IS HE SO OBSESSED WITH THAT IRON BIRD?
MEANWHILE, ANOTHER HAS FOUND HE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING A FALSE TRAIL...
MY GENERAL! THIS PEASANT SAYS A GREEN-HAIRED ONE PAID HIM TO CARRY HEAVY ROCKS THIS WAY!
THE JOKER! HE DARED ADD TRICKERY TO HIS CRIMES! HE HAS TAKEN MY EAGLE ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS! AFTER THEM!
AND MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD THE HIGH PEAK PASSES...
THAT BIRD BETTER BE WORTH ALL THIS, JOKER!
SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR PUSHING, FRIGHT-FACE!
SUDDENLY...
WOK
A STUN ARROW!
IT'S THEM-- EMERALD ARCHER AND THE ATOM!
BATMAN'S WITH THEM!!
KAROW
NOT DEAD? THEY'LL ALL DIE NOW!
POW POW
THE JOKER'S GRENADE HURTLES UP AMONG HIGH ROCK FORMATIONS...
BLA-AM
AVALANCHE!!
EEEEE
NEEII
END PART 1! THE ACTION, THRILLS AND MYSTERY OF THE TRAIL OF THE BIG, BLACK BIRD CONTINUE TO CASCADE IN PART 2... NEXT!

PART 2 - GREEN ARROW'S TREACHERY

AS THE HUNTING HAWK WHEELS UPWARDS...
CAN'T ACTIVATE MY CONTROLS...OR THROW A PUNCH AT THIS FEATHERED KIDNAPPER!
NOTE: ATOM CAN HIT WITH THE FORCE OF A 180-POUND MAN, WHICH, AS RAY PALMER, PHYSICIST AND ATHLETE, HE IS!
MOMENTS LATER...
MEANWHILE, RIDING LIKE THE WIND...
TWUNG
TWUNG
ZING
THOSE CLOWNS ARE MESSIN' WITH THE BEST!
WOK
WOK
WOK
BUT--
LATER, A SOLEMN PROCESSION ENTERS AN ANCIENT CITY...
THIS IS PATHAN... WHERE THE EMPEROR EAGLE WAS CREATED!



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NOW THE BOLD BOWMAN GRASPS THE ANCIENT WEAPON OF THE MAN WHO CONQUERED HALF THE WORLD... BENDING IT BACK... BACK... BACK...
IMPOSSIBLE!
ALEXANDER WAS A GOD!
WHAT? IT BENDS--?
HE HAS DONE IT!!
WITH BLURRING SPEED, GREEN ARROW DRAWS A SHAFT FROM HIS QUIVER...
I COULD KILL YOU IN A TWINKLING, ZARDIK, BUT I WANT US TO BE FRIENDS!
YOUR MIGHT IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION ...AND YOUR FRIEND IS NO DOUBT A SORCERER SINCE HE CAN REDUCE HIMSELF SO!
I BOW TO YOUR WISHES!
=Whew=! G.A. IS SURE SOME GAMBLER!
SOME TIME LATER...
YOU HAD THEM MAKE ANOTHER EMPEROR EAGLE?
WHY NOT, ATOM?
THEY'RE THE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THE WORKERS WHO MADE THE ORIGINAL! NOW FOR THE NEXT STEP IN GETTING THE FINAL GIGGLE ON JOKER AND TWO-FACE!
WHAT ABOUT THE GRUESOME TWOSOME? A FEW MILES AWAY, AS NIGHT FALLS...
SHOULDN'T WE POST A GUARD, CLOWN-PUSS?
NO NEED, SCREW-JAW! WE LEFT THAT SUPER-TRIO FOR DEAD! AND GENERAL KHAN'S PROBABLY STILL CHASING THAT LOAD OF ROCKS!
NIGHTIE-NIGHT!

SOON...
FREED, THE HEAVY WAGON BEARING THE MASSIVE IRON BIRD ROLLS SILENTLY DOWN THE OLD CARAVAN TRAIL...
DOWN...DOWN... IT PLUNGES...UNTIL...
...ITS DESCENT IS SLOWED, THEN STOPPED BY THE HORSEMEN...
QUICKLY, A SWITCH IS MADE...
YOU THINK JOKER WILL BE FOOLED?
EVEN A MOTHER EAGLE WOULDN'T KNOW ONE BIRD FROM ANOTHER, PAL!
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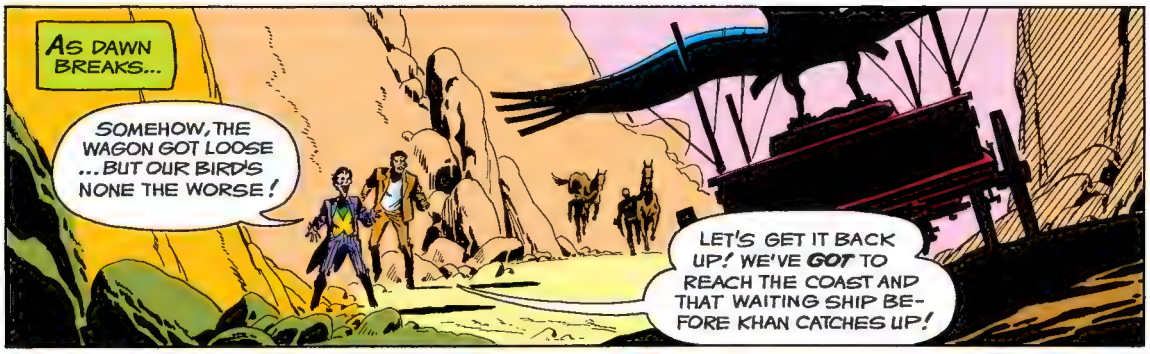
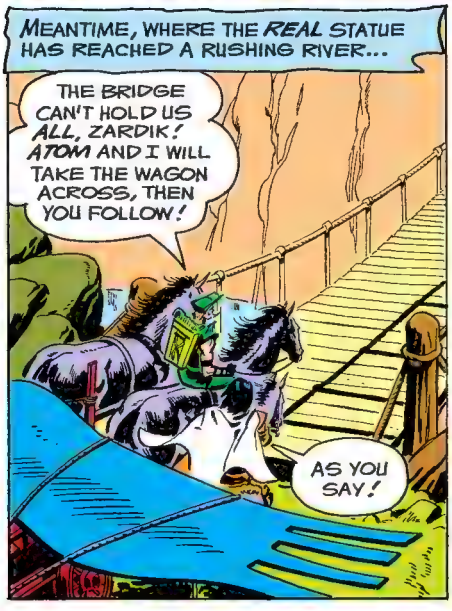
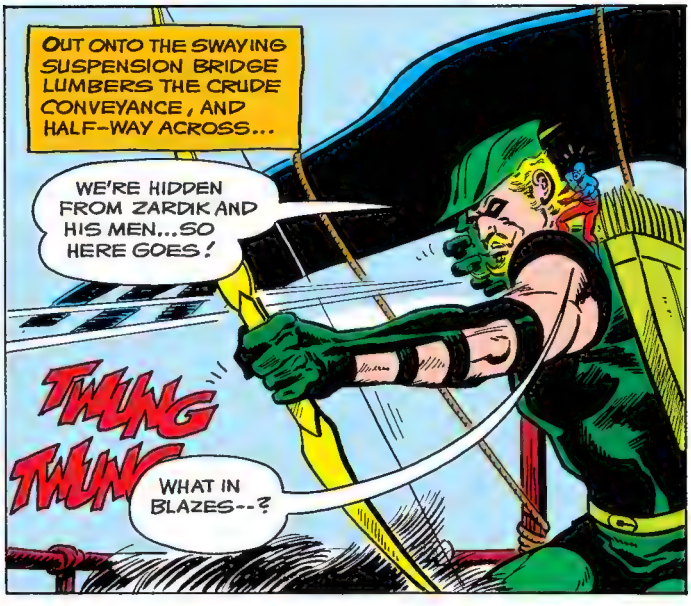
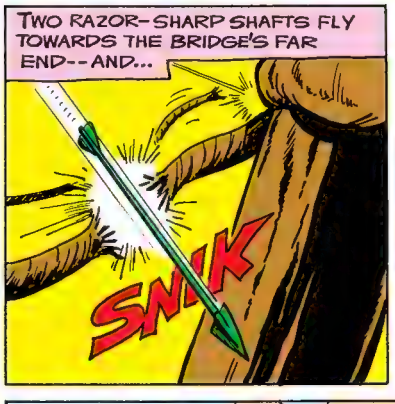
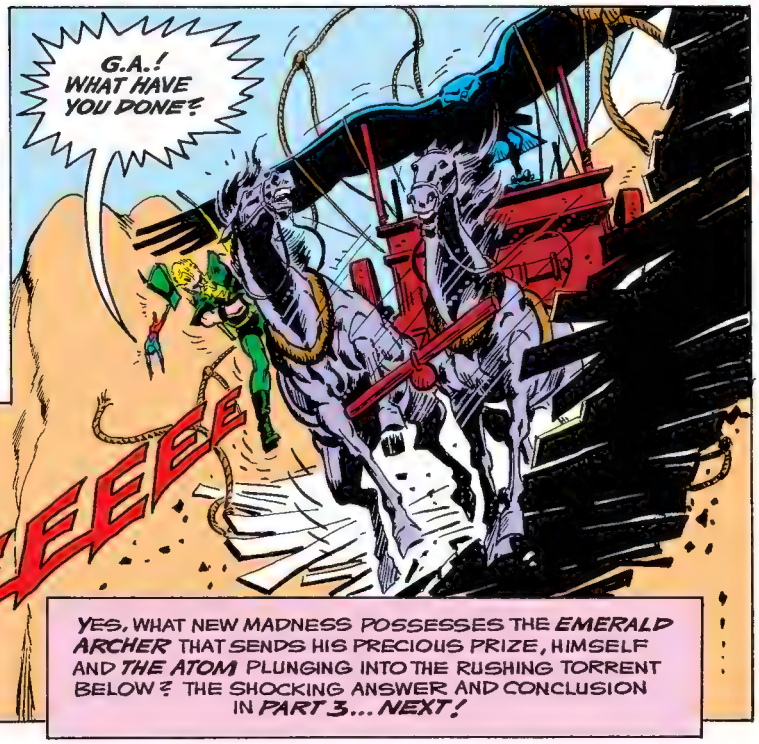




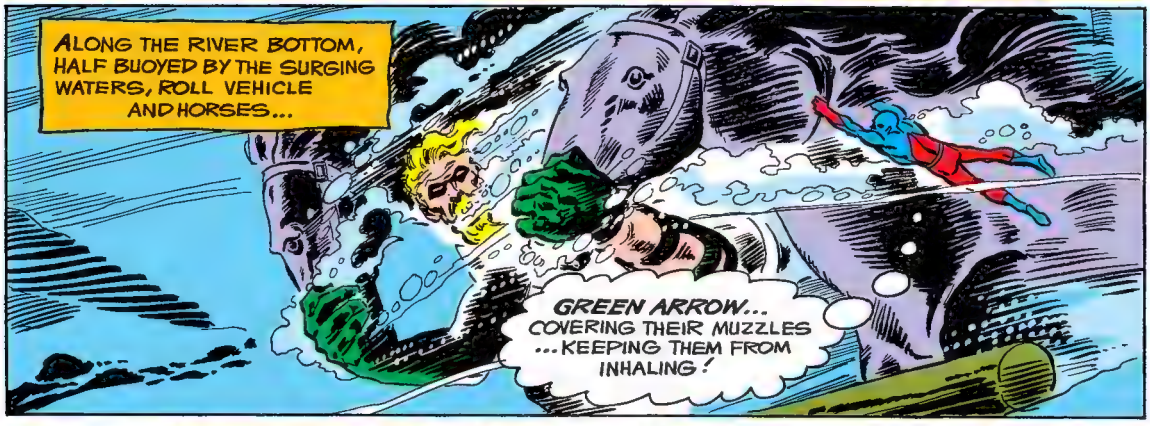


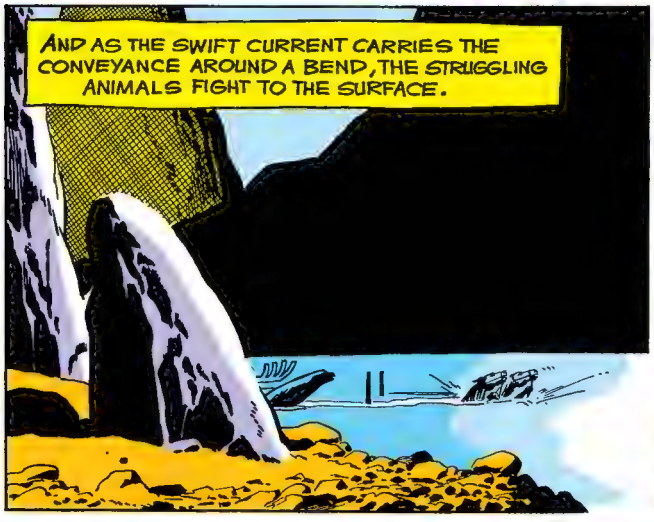


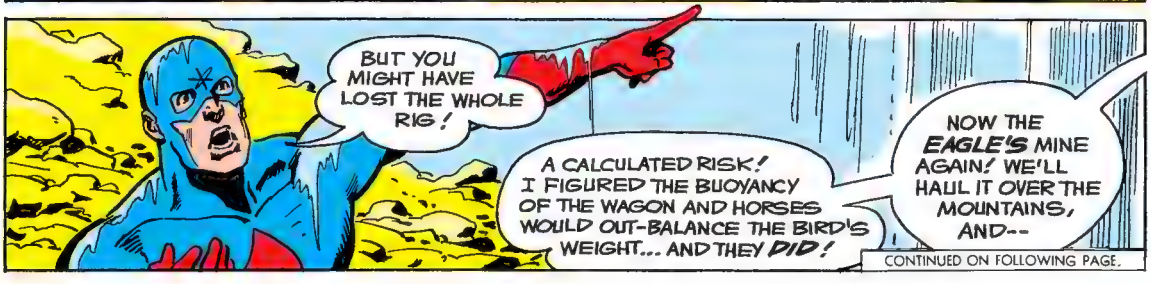


YES, WHAT NEW MADNESS POSSESSES THE *EMERALD ARCHER* THAT SENDS HIS PRECIOUS PRIZE, HIMSELF AND *THE ATOM* PLUNGING INTO THE RUSHING TORRENT BELOW? THE SHOCKING ANSWER AND CONCLUSION IN *PART 3... NEXT!*

PART 3 - TO WHOM THE LAST LAUGH?







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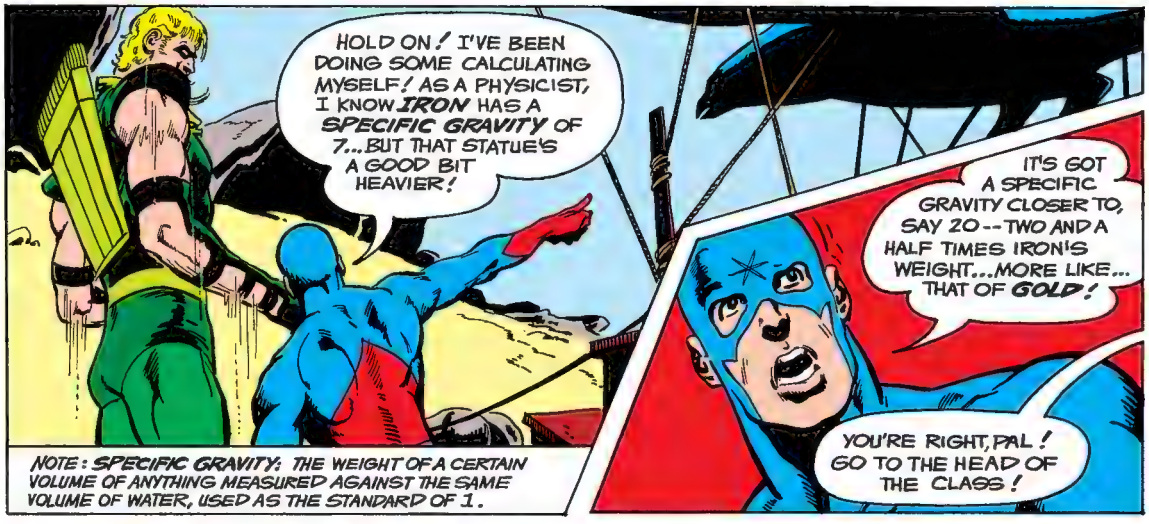
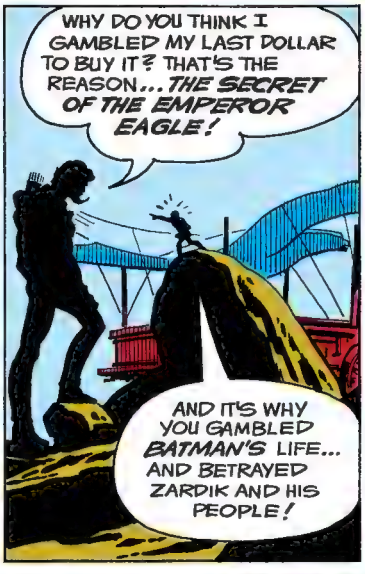
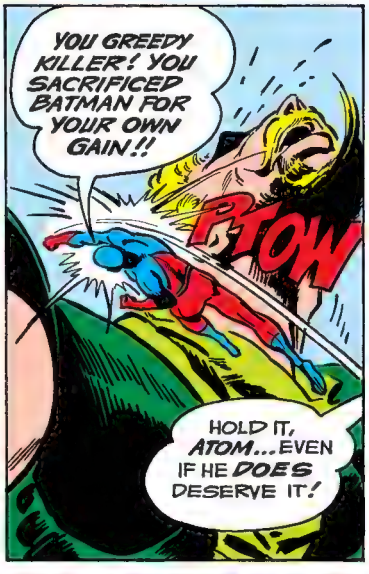
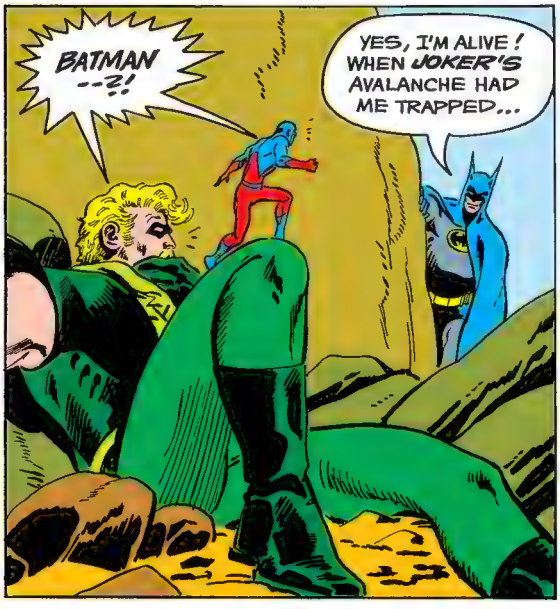

HOLD ON! I'VE BEEN DOING SOME CALCULATING MYSELF! AS A PHYSICIST, I KNOW IRON HAS A SPECIFIC GRAVITY OF 7...BUT THAT STATUE'S A GOOD BIT HEAVIER!
IT'S GOT A SPECIFIC GRAVITY CLOSER TO, SAY 20--TWO AND A HALF TIMES IRON'S WEIGHT...MORE LIKE... THAT OF GOLD!
YOU'RE RIGHT, PAL! GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS!
NOTE: SPECIFIC GRAVITY: THE WEIGHT OF A CERTAIN VOLUME OF ANYTHING MEASURED AGAINST THE SAME VOLUME OF WATER, USED AS THE STANDARD OF 1.

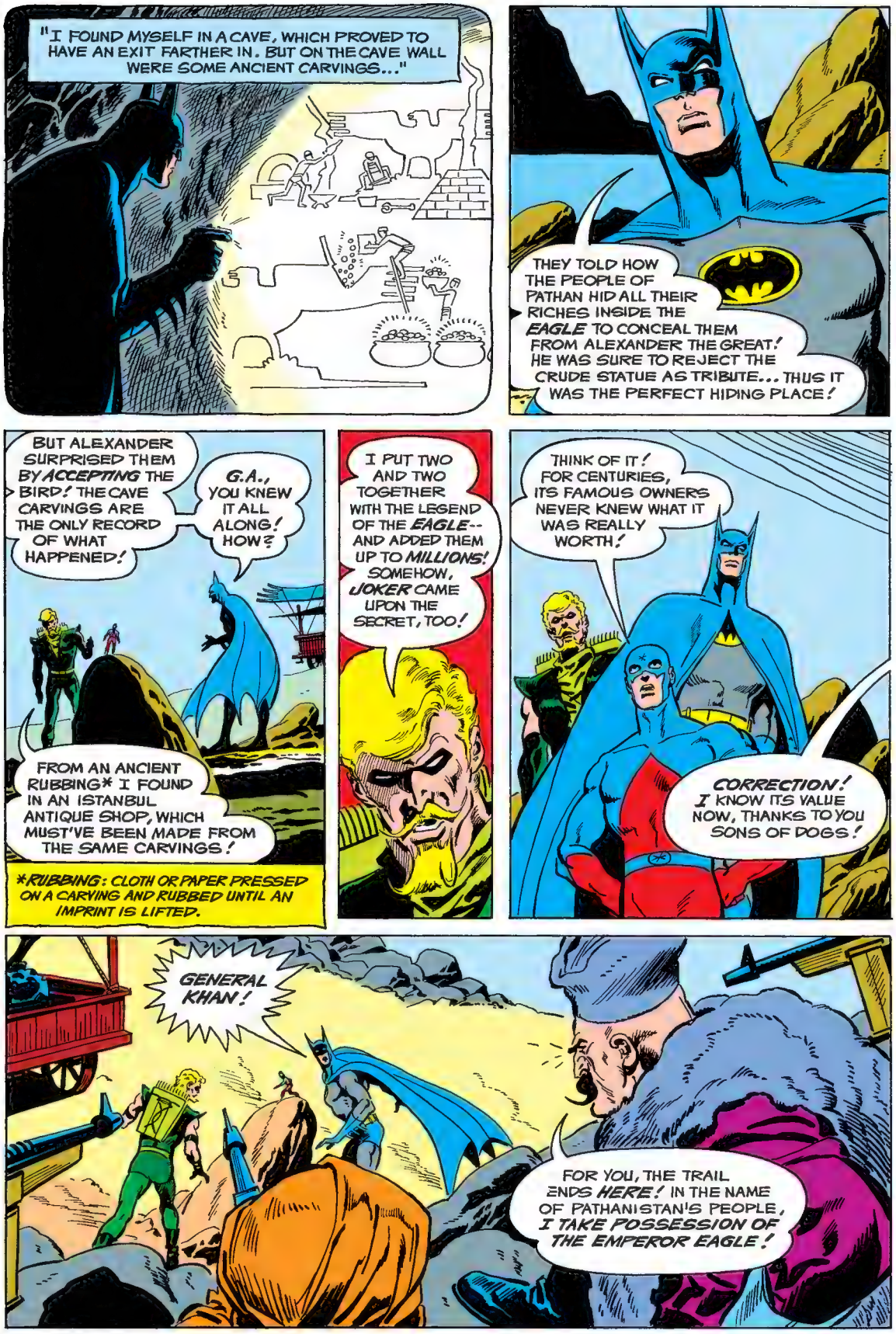
YOU MEAN, IT'S NOT HOLLOW ...IT'S FILLED WITH GOLD?!
CHECK--AND SPRINKLED WITH DIAMONDS AND RUBIES! IMAGINE WHAT ALL THAT'S WORTH TODAY?
MILLIONS!


WHY DO YOU THINK I GAMBLED MY LAST DOLLAR TO BUY IT? THAT'S THE REASON... THE SECRET OF THE EMPEROR EAGLE!
AND IT'S WHY YOU GAMBLED BATMAN'S LIFE... AND BETRAYED ZARDIK AND HIS PEOPLE!


YOU GREEDY KILLER! YOU SACRIFICED BATMAN FOR YOUR OWN GAIN!!
PTOW
HOLD IT, ATOM...EVEN IF HE DOES DESERVE IT!

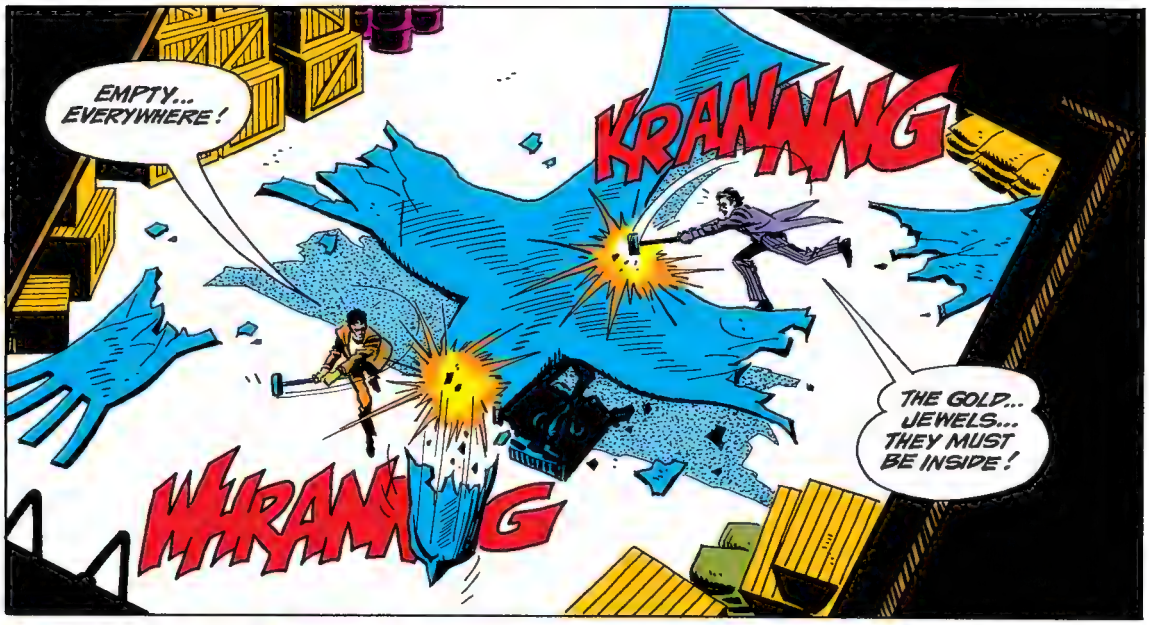

BATMAN --?!
YES, I'M ALIVE! WHEN JOKER'S AVALANCHE HAD ME TRAPPED...

"...AT THE LAST INSTANT, I FELL BACK AGAINST THE CANYON WALL AND ACCIDENTALLY HIT A SECRET DOOR IN THE ROCK..."

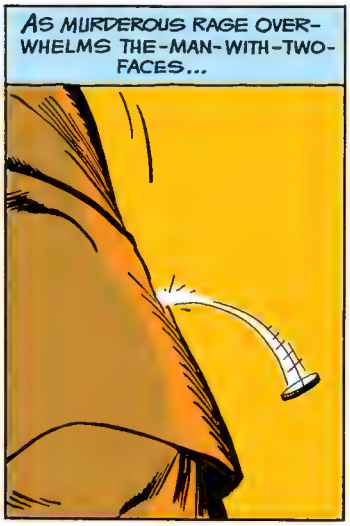

"I FOUND MYSELF IN A CAVE, WHICH PROVED TO HAVE AN EXIT FARTHER IN. BUT ON THE CAVE WALL WERE SOME ANCIENT CARVINGS..."
THEY TOLD HOW THE PEOPLE OF PATHAN HID ALL THEIR RICHES INSIDE THE EAGLE TO CONCEAL THEM FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT! HE WAS SURE TO REJECT THE CRUDE STATUE AS TRIBUTE... THUS IT WAS THE PERFECT HIDING PLACE!
BUT ALEXANDER SURPRISED THEM BY ACCEPTING THE BIRD! THE CAVE CARVINGS ARE THE ONLY RECORD OF WHAT HAPPENED!
G.A., YOU KNEW IT ALL ALONG! HOW?
FROM AN ANCIENT RUBBING* I FOUND IN AN ISTANBUL ANTIQUE SHOP, WHICH MUST'VE BEEN MADE FROM THE SAME CARVINGS!
*RUBBING: CLOTH OR PAPER PRESSED ON A CARVING AND RUBBED UNTIL AN IMPRINT IS LIFTED.
I PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER WITH THE LEGEND OF THE EAGLE-- AND ADDED THEM UP TO MILLIONS! SOMEHOW, JOKER CAME UPON THE SECRET, TOO!
THINK OF IT! FOR CENTURIES, ITS FAMOUS OWNERS NEVER KNEW WHAT IT WAS REALLY WORTH!
CORRECTION! I KNOW ITS VALUE NOW, THANKS TO YOU SONS OF DOGS!
GENERAL KHAN!
FOR YOU, THE TRAIL ENDS HERE! IN THE NAME OF PATHANISTAN'S PEOPLE, I TAKE POSSESSION OF THE EMPEROR EAGLE!

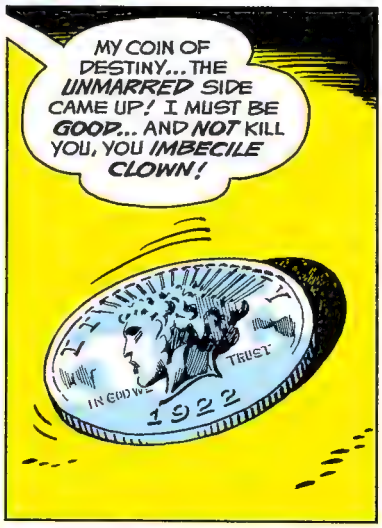
WHAT? NO, YOU DON'T, BUSTER--
WHOK K
VERY SENSIBLE, BATMAN! I WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM! NOW ALL OF YOU MAY LEAVE THE COUNTRY UNHARMED... IF YOU GO AT ONCE!
IT'S A DEAL, GENERAL! I'M SURE WE'VE USED UP ALL OUR LUCK FOR A LONG TIME TO COME!
IT MAY BE WORTH A KING'S RANSOM... BUT I'M GLAD TO BE FREE OF THAT BIRD, BATMAN!
SO AM I, ATOM! NOW LET'S MAKE TRACKS!
NOT LONG AFTER, AS THE CARAVAN RUMBLES ALONG A NARROW CLIFF-SIDE TRAIL...
SUDDENLY...
THE EAGLE TOPPLES!
KRAKRACKKK
CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

LIKE SOME FIERCE BIRD OF PREY, THE IRON EAGLE CARRIES PATHANISTAN'S RULER... DOWN... DOWN...
AIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WHILE ABOVE, GOING THE OTHER WAY...
KHAN... THE STATUE... GONE INTO THAT BOTTOMLESS CHASM WHERE NEITHER CAN EVER BE RECOVERED!
THE BLACK BIRD... IT SAVED ITS FINAL CURSE FOR ITS LAST OWNER! THAT COULD HAVE BEEN GREEN ARROW... OR US!
I JUST THOUGHT OF THEM -- WHERE ARE THE JOKER AND TWO-FACE?
THAT DASTARDLY DUO, BATMAN? WELL, ON A RUSTY TRAMP STEAMER PULLING AWAY FROM THE COAST...
FAREWELL, PATHANISTAN! HOW BETTER TO ENJOY THIS CRUISE THAN TO BREAK OPEN THE EAGLE AND COUNT OUR RICHES! HA HA HEE HEE!
SOON, IN THE SHIP'S HOLD...
THERE! HA-HA -- I'VE BROKEN OFF ONE WING --
KRANNG
IT... IT'S EMPTY!
NO! IT CAN'T BE! I'LL SMASH THE OTHER WING!!
KRUNNG
IT'S EMPTY, TOO!

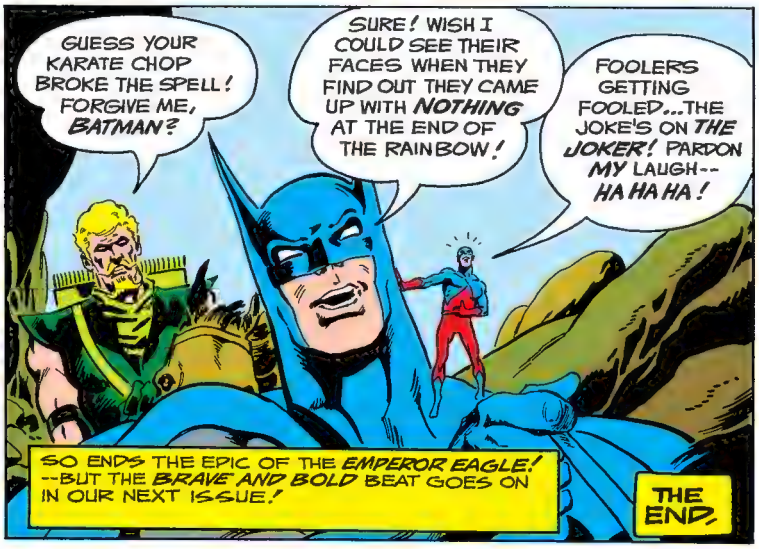

EMPTY... EVERYWHERE!
KRANNNG
WHAMMG
THE GOLD... JEWELS... THEY MUST BE INSIDE!

YOU SNICKERING IDIOT! WE WENT THROUGH ALL THAT FOR NOTHING! I'LL STRANGLE YOU!!


AS MURDEROUS RAGE OVERWHELMS THE-MAN-WITH-TWO-FACES...


MY COIN OF DESTINY... THE UNMARRED SIDE CAME UP! I MUST BE GOOD... AND NOT KILL YOU, YOU IMBECILE CLOWN!
LIBERTY
IN GOD WE TRUST
1922

BUT IT DOESN'T STOP ME FROM KNOCKING YOU AROUND THIS RUSTY TUB ALL THE WAY HOME!


GUESS YOUR KARATE CHOP BROKE THE SPELL! FORGIVE ME, BATMAN?
SURE! WISH I COULD SEE THEIR FACES WHEN THEY FIND OUT THEY CAME UP WITH NOTHING AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW!
FOOLERS GETTING FOOLED... THE JOKE'S ON THE JOKER! PARDON MY LAUGH-- HA HA HA!
SO ENDS THE EPIC OF THE EMPEROR EAGLE! --BUT THE BRAVE AND BOLD BEAT GOES ON IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!
THE END

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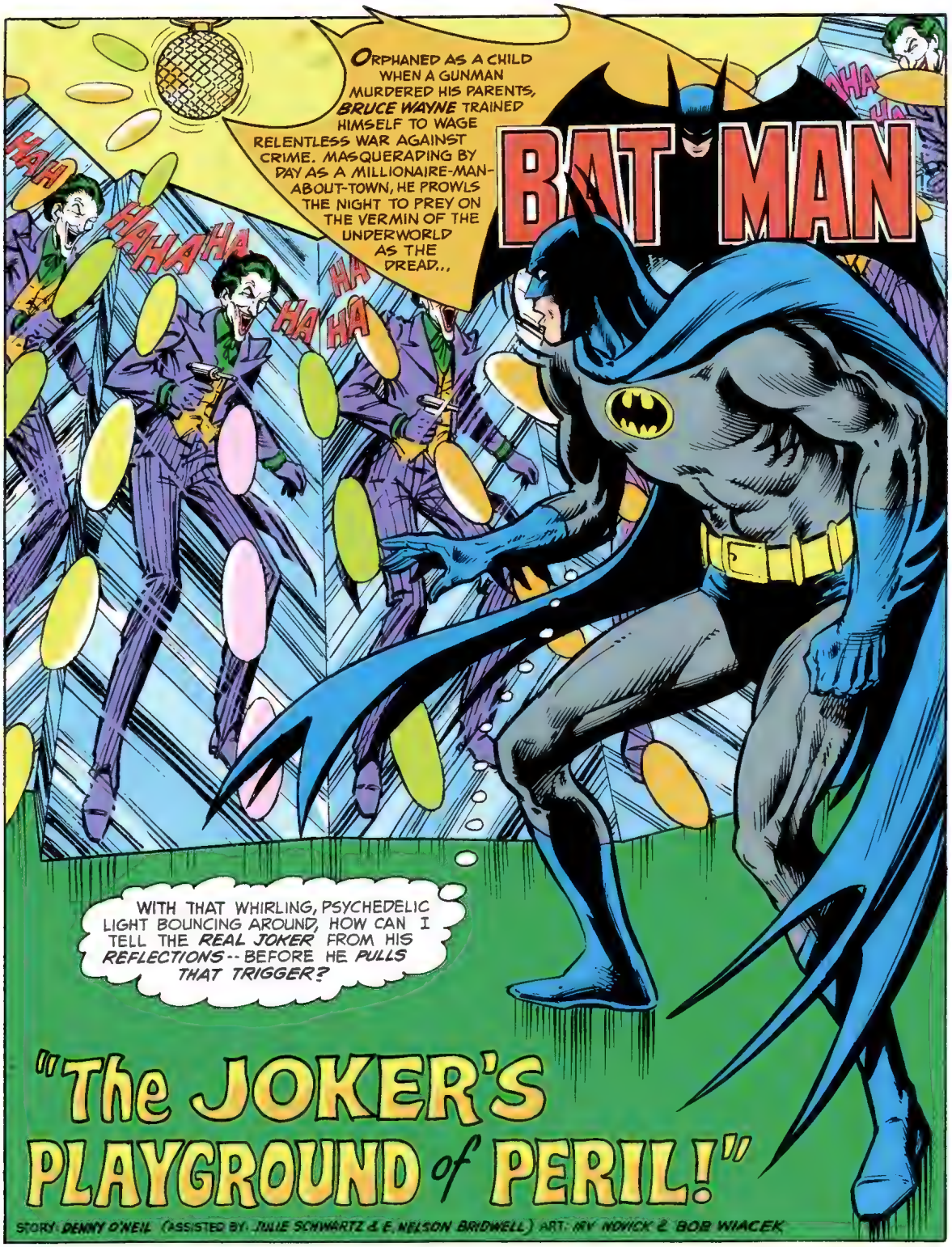
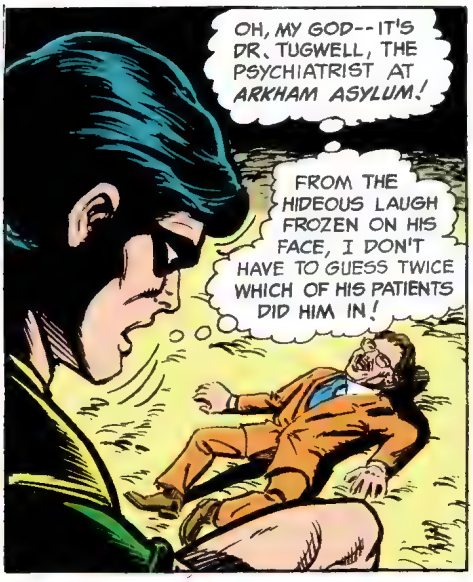
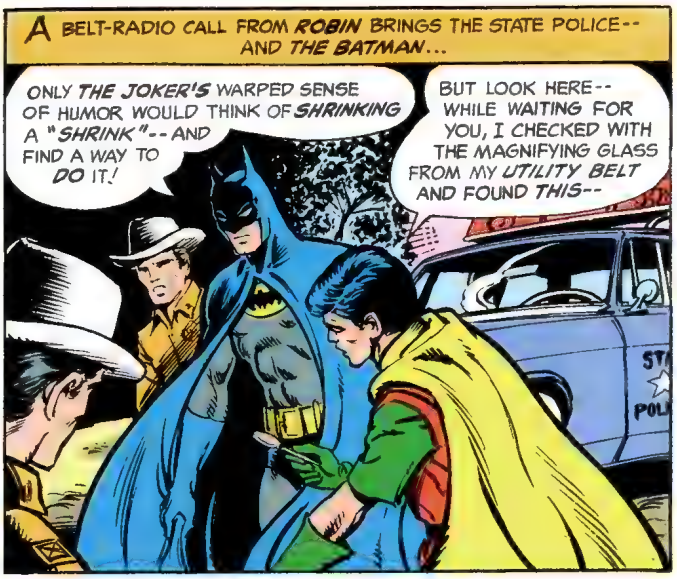
BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BUTT OUT, BATMAN! I'LL KNOCK OFF THIS JOKER FIRST--
--THEN-- I'LL HAPPILY DO THE SAME TO YOU!
HAHAHAHA

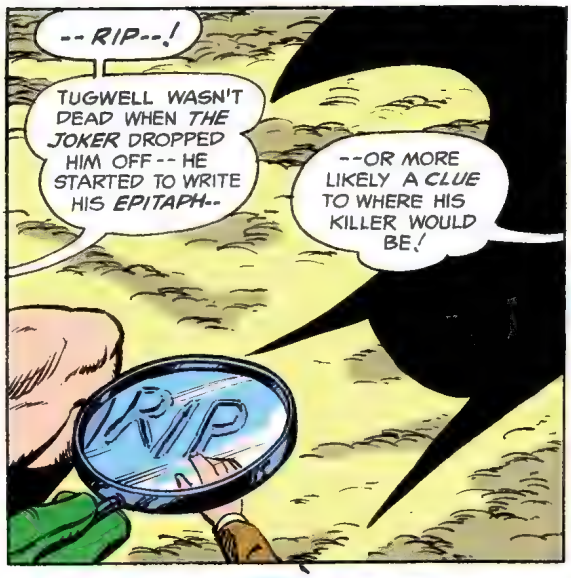

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN A GUNMAN MURDERED HIS PARENTS, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME. MASQUERADING BY DAY AS A MILLIONAIRE-MAN-ABOUT-TOWN, HE PROWLS THE NIGHT TO PREY ON THE VERMIN OF THE UNDERWORLD AS THE DREAD...
BAT MAN
HAH
HAHAHA
HA HA
HA
WITH THAT WHIRLING, PSYCHEDELIC LIGHT BOUNCING AROUND, HOW CAN I TELL THE REAL JOKER FROM HIS REFLECTIONS -- BEFORE HE PULLS THAT TRIGGER?
"The JOKER'S PLAYGROUND of PERIL!"
STORY: DENNY O'NEIL (ASSISTED BY: JULIE SCHWARTZ & E. NELSON BRIDWELL) ART: IRV NOVICK & BOB WIACEK

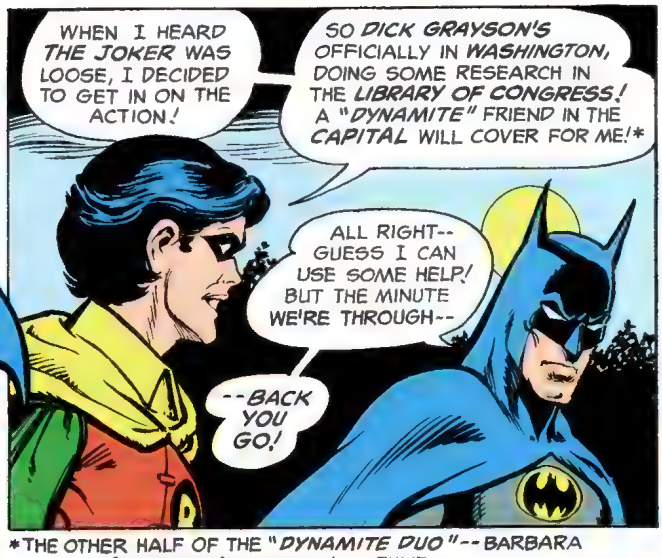
NIGHT, DARKEST NIGHT...ON A LONELY ROAD SOMEWHERE NORTH OF GOTHAM CITY--
AS YOUR PSYCHIATRIST, JOKER, I MUST SAY I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE WAY YOU EFFECTED YOUR ESCAPE!
JESTER ICE CREAM
TAKING ME AS A HOSTAGE... AND HAVING YOUR HENCHMEN LEAVE THIS ICE CREAM WAGON AS AN ESCAPE VEHICLE! VERY AMUSING!
THEN WHY AREN'T YOU LAUGHING, DR. TUGWELL? YOU NEVER LAUGH AT MY JOKES! I EVEN TOLD YOU ALL MY PLANS-- WITHOUT GETTING A TITTER!
PULL OVER AND GET OUT-- I'M SICK OF YOUR COMPANY!
OH, THANK YOU-- I MUST GET HOME AND ULG! WHAT IS THIS--?
THIS IS A JOKE YOU'LL DEFINITELY LAUGH AT, DOC! YOU'RE A SHRINK--
--SO YOU'RE GETTING SHRUNK! HA, HA, HA, HA!
HA, HA, HA HA, HA, HA-- SOMETHING -- HA, HA-- MAKING ME LAUGH --HA, HA, HA!
A MAN, NO LARGER THAN A CHILD'S DOLL, DOOMED TO A HORRIBLE DEATH IN THE WAKE OF THE TRUCK AS IT ROARS AWAY TO THE SOUND OF SAVAGE LAUGHTER--
HAHAHAHAH
HAHAHAHAHAHA
--POURING FROM THE THROAT OF THE MANIACAL DRIVER!
HAHAHAH
HAHA
WHAT FURTHER TERRIFYING CONSEQUENCES WILL RESULT FROM THE JOKER'S LATEST BREAK-OUT FROM THE ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE, AS HE ROLLS ALONG IN THE DECEPTIVELY COLORFUL VEHICLE?

MEANWHILE, AT GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS, IN RESPONSE TO A FAMILIAR SUMMONS...
HOW URGENT IS IT, COMMISSIONER?
PLENTY!
ONE OF OUR MEN SPOTTED PIERRE FRAGE ENTERING THE COUNTRY!
FRAGE THE FENCE--THE WORLD'S MOST WANTED DEALER IN STOLEN JEWELS?
THAT'S THE BOY!
WHAT'S WORSE--HE'S WANGLED AN INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL "REVELRY IN THE PARK" CHARITY AFFAIR TOMORROW NIGHT!
WE SUSPECT HE'LL BE THERE TO MAKE A BUY... BUT WE DON'T KNOW FROM WHOM!
WE CAN'T ARREST HIM ON SUSPICION--
--SO YOU'D LIKE ME TO HELP KEEP AN EYE OR TWO ON HIM, RIGHT?
I'LL BE THERE--
--COUNT ON IT!
MEANTIME, A COLORFULLY-CLAD YOUTH TOOLS HIS MOTORCYCLE ONTO A SIDE ROAD...
THE TRAFFIC IS MURDER! IT WILL TAKE HOURS TO REACH GOTHAM ON THE THROUGHWAY--
--BUT FORTUNATELY, I KNOW A SHORTCUT!
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT IN THE ROAD? A DOLL OR--?
SKREEEEEEEE





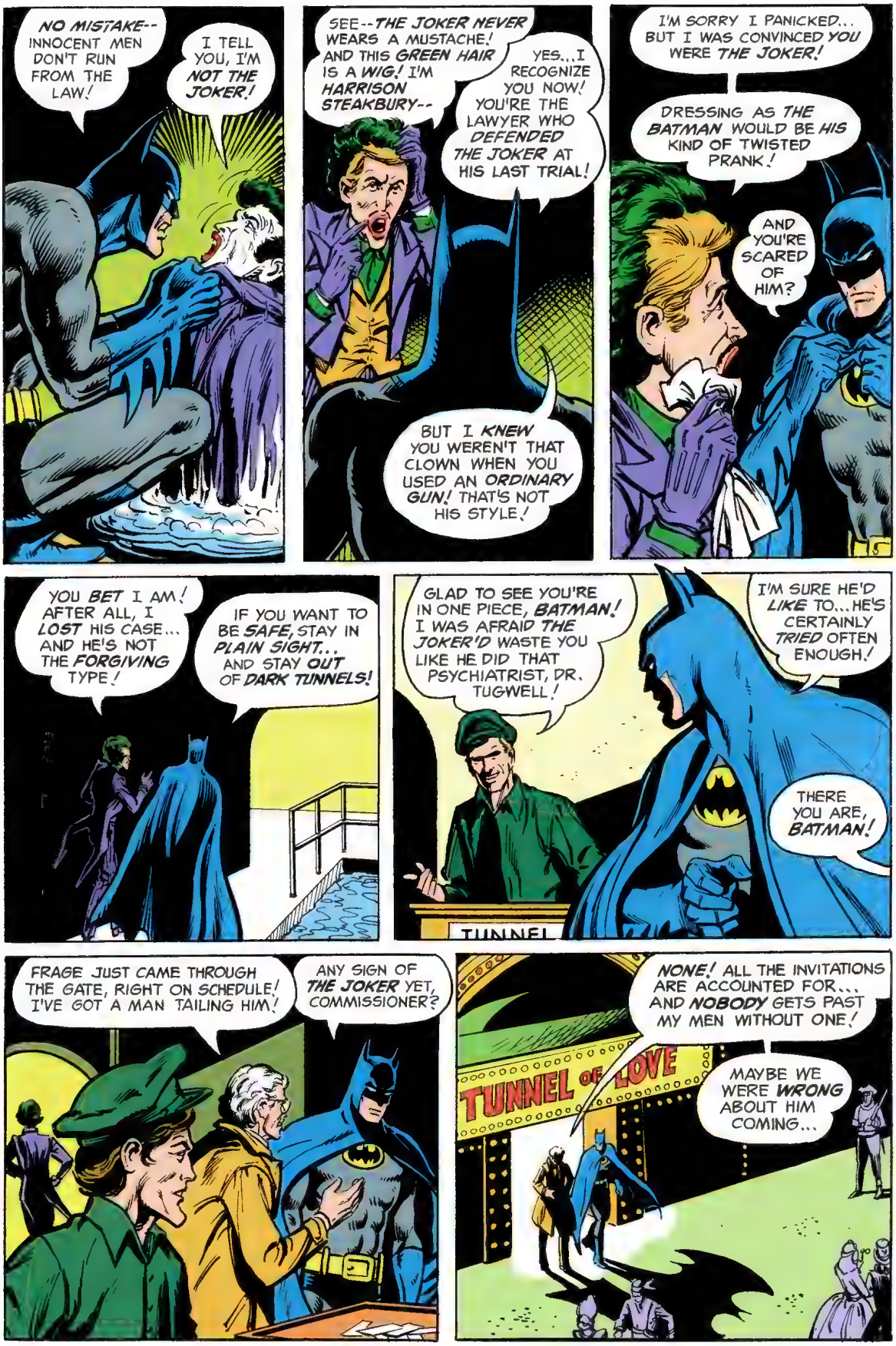




*THE OTHER HALF OF THE "DYNAMITE DUO"--BARBARA (BATGIRL) GORDON! --JULIE

PARKSIDE PLAYGROUND.. A MAN-MADE FAIRYLAND ON THE EDGE OF THE OCEAN...A GLITTERING STRIP THAT GLOWS WITH THE LIGHT OF A MILLION BULBS AND TINKLES WITH THE LAUGHTER OF MERRYMAKERS...
...A PLACE OF WILD RIDES, TOOTHSOME CANDY AND CHILDLIKE GAMES...THIS NIGHT, THE SITE OF A COSTUME CHARITY CARNIVAL...
PARKSIDE PLAYGROUND
I WISH THEY'D CHOSEN A DIFFERENT KIND OF AFFAIR TO RAISE MONEY!
ALL THESE MASKS AND COSTUMES ONLY MAKE OUR JOB HARDER!
ROBIN! THAT MAN OVER BY THE TUNNEL OF LOVE...DRESSED AS THE JOKER! I WONDER--?
AW, COME ON--HE WOULDN'T DARE--!
HE MIGHT! COMING DRESSED AS HIMSELF IS EXACTLY THE SORT OF STUNT THAT WOULD APPEAL TO HIS WARPED SENSE OF HUMOR!
STAY PUT... I'LL CHECK HIM OUT!
HE'S SPOTTED ME... AND HE'S RUNNING!
NO INNOCENT PERSON HAS ANY REASON TO FEAR ME--!
TUNNEL
EH--? SOME CHAP DRESSED AS THE BATMAN --CHASING A JOKER! PART OF THE ENTERTAINMENT, NO DOUBT!
OH, I HOPE NOT! I'D MUCH RATHER THEY WERE GENUINE! REAL LIFE IS SO MUCH MORE EXCITING!
OUTA MY WAY, BLAST YOU!
WHAT'S'A BIG IDEA...
ONCE IN THE TUNNEL, HE'LL BE IN A PERFECT POSITION FOR AN AMBUSH!

TOO LATE! HE'S INSIDE...AND PROBABLY SETTING A TRAP FOR ME!
TUNNEL OF LOVE TICKETS
LISTEN, FELLA...IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY INTO THE TUNNEL?
SURE...ONLY I DON'T UNDERSTAND--
YOU DON'T HAVE TO! JUST DO AS I SAY!
YOU'LL LUV THE TUNNEL OF LOVE!
MOMENTS LATER...A BOAT BEARING A CAPED FIGURE GLIDES FORWARD--TOWARD A WAITING GUN--!
THOUGHT YOU'D CATCH ME UNAWARE, HUH? WELL, YOU WERE WRONG!
BAM
BAM
BAM
I'VE LIVED IN MORTAL AGONY... AFRAID YOU'D-- EHH?
A DUMMY--?!?
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN--
--THE BATMAN WOULDN'T BE STUPID ENOUGH TO FALL INTO YOUR TRAP--
--NOT WHEN IT'S SO SATISFYING TO FALL ON TOP OF YOU!
WHACK!
YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE-- EUHH!
SPLASH!


NO MISTAKE-- INNOCENT MEN DON'T RUN FROM THE LAW!
I TELL YOU, I'M NOT THE JOKER!
SEE--THE JOKER NEVER WEARS A MUSTACHE! AND THIS GREEN HAIR IS A WIG! I'M HARRISON STEAKBURY--
YES...I RECOGNIZE YOU NOW! YOU'RE THE LAWYER WHO DEFENDED THE JOKER AT HIS LAST TRIAL!
BUT I KNEW YOU WEREN'T THAT CLOWN WHEN YOU USED AN ORDINARY GUN! THAT'S NOT HIS STYLE!
I'M SORRY I PANICKED.. BUT I WAS CONVINCED YOU WERE THE JOKER!
DRESSING AS THE BATMAN WOULD BE HIS KIND OF TWISTED PRANK!
AND YOU'RE SCARED OF HIM?
YOU BET I AM! AFTER ALL, I LOST HIS CASE... AND HE'S NOT THE FORGIVING TYPE!
IF YOU WANT TO BE SAFE, STAY IN PLAIN SIGHT... AND STAY OUT OF DARK TUNNELS!
GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE IN ONE PIECE, BATMAN! I WAS AFRAID THE JOKER'D WASTE YOU LIKE HE DID THAT PSYCHIATRIST, DR. TUGWELL!
I'M SURE HE'D LIKE TO...HE'S CERTAINLY TRIED OFTEN ENOUGH!
THERE YOU ARE, BATMAN!
TUNNEL
FRAGE JUST CAME THROUGH THE GATE, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE! I'VE GOT A MAN TAILING HIM!
ANY SIGN OF THE JOKER YET, COMMISSIONER?
NONE! ALL THE INVITATIONS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR... AND NOBODY GETS PAST MY MEN WITHOUT ONE!
TUNNEL OF LOVE
MAYBE WE WERE WRONG ABOUT HIM COMING...

MAYBE... BUT I DON'T THINK SO!
BLAST IT, HE COULD BE ANYBODY--EVEN YOU!
IF THAT'S A JOKE, BATMAN, YOU'VE LOST YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR!
I WON'T NEED IT-- THE JOKER WILL TAKE CARE OF THE LAUGHS!
COMMISSIONER--!
PIERRE FRAGE JUST GAVE US THE SLIP... DUCKED OUT THROUGH A SIDE DOOR OF THE FUNHOUSE!
WELL, DON'T STAND AROUND-- FAN OUT... SEARCH EVERYWHERE! FIND HIM!
SNIFF... SNIFF!
COMMISSIONER... I SMELL SMOKE!
THE GIANT SLIDING BOARD... IT'S ON FIRE!
AND IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A LITTLE GIRL TRAPPED UP THERE!
I'LL RING THE ALARM!
GIANT SLI
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT!
COMMISSIONER... FIND ROBIN! TELL HIM TO KEEP THE MAN DRESSED AS THE JOKER IN SIGHT!
I'M GOING FOR THAT CHILD!
THE ENTRANCE IS ALREADY AFLAME... IN ABOUT A MINUTE THE FIRE WILL CUT OFF THE SLIDE, TOO!
--WHICH GIVES ME LESS THAN SIXTY SECONDS--

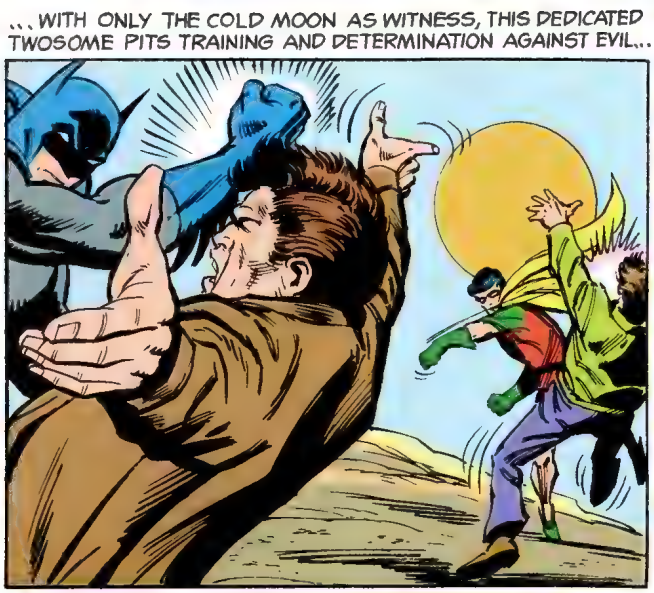
--TO RESCUE THE CHILD WITH THE HELP OF THAT PARACHUTE JUMP!
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS -- JUST GET ME TO THE TOP OF THIS CONTRAPTION... FAST!
HIGH INTO THE DENSE, SMOKY AIR THE CAPED FIGURE ASCENDS, BUNCHING HIS MUSCLES AS HE GOES...
...AND AT THE TOP, HE SPRINGS... CROSSES THE CHASM WITH A SINGLE JUMP IMPOSSIBLE TO ANY SAVE A BATMAN...
...STEEL-TAUT FINGERS CLAMP ONTO A HOT RAILING...
...AND AN INSTANT LATER, THE CAPED CRUSADER FLINGS HIMSELF TOWARD A SMALL, WHIMPERING BUNDLE...

MOMMY... MOMMY... I WANT MY MAMA!
I'LL TAKE YOU TO HER, HONEY... DON'T BE SCARED! WE'RE GOING ON A LITTLE TRIP...
I WON'T LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU!
I CAN'T CHANCE JUMPING BACK TO THE PARACHUTE TOWER WITH HER WEIGHT IN MY ARMS...
...BUT LUCKILY MY CLOAK'S STILL DAMP FROM THE DUNKING IN THE TUNNEL...
...AND THAT GIVES US ANOTHER WAY TO GO--
--STRAIGHT DOWN THROUGH THE BLAZE!
THE WET CAPE WILL PROTECT US-- I HOPE!
AND A TENSE FEW SECONDS LATER...
MOMMY!
THANK HEAVENS, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
BATMAN--
--I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU--
HOLD IT, COMMISSIONER... I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING! FRAGE REAPPEARED TO WATCH THE FIRE... HE STOOD NEAR THE MAN IN THE JOKER COSTUME...
...THEN HE WANDERED OFF TOWARD THE FUN HOUSE AGAIN! THAT'S WHERE HE IS AT THIS MOMENT...
YES... AND ROBIN'S KEEPING AN EYE ON HIM! BUT HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU KNOW?
YOU COULDN'T HAVE SEEN IT ALL!

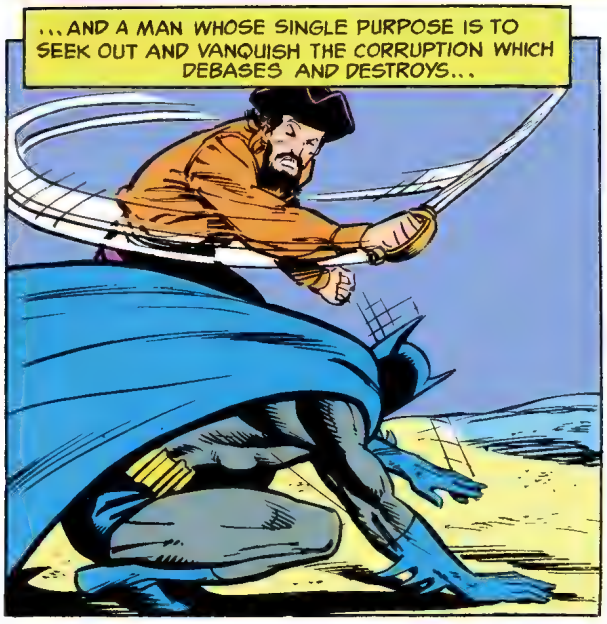
I DIDN'T HAVE TO! WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR MEN, YOU CAN PREDICT THEIR ACTIONS!
TRUE--BUT YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHO THAT FAKE JOKER IS!
HOUSE OF FUN
STEAKBURY IS THE NAME--A CRIMINAL LAWYER--IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!
HAVE HIM ARRESTED FOR GRAND THEFT! I'LL JOIN ROBIN... HE'LL BE NEEDING MY HELP SOON!
OLD TIME funny MOVIES
MAN, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU! I WANTED TO GIVE YOU A HAND WITH THAT RESCUE!
GORDON INSISTED I FOLLOW FRAGE, THOUGH...
GOOD YOU DID! THAT'S HIM IN THE BLACKBEARD OUTFIT?
RIGHT! HE HASN'T BUDGED FROM THAT SHOOTING GALLERY!
HE WILL! WATCH--HE'LL SOON BE GOING BEHIND THE TARGET--
TEST YOUR SKILL
THERE HE GOES! B-BUT HOW'D YOU GUESS--?
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER--I REASONED IT!
C'MON, LET'S TAG ALONG--
A HOLE... FRESHLY CUT IN THE WALL...
...AND LEADING OUT TO THE BEACH BEHIND THE PARK! FRAGE WILL BE HEADING FOR THE OCEAN ... HE CAN'T CHANCE BEING SEARCHED!
SO HE HAS TO GO OUT THIS WAY--WITH SOME PLAY-MATES, NO DOUBT!
ROBIN--GET SET FOR A FIGHT!

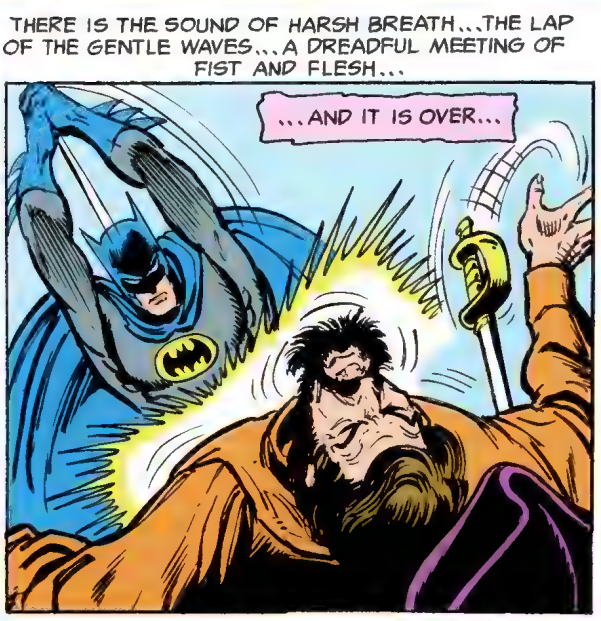
THEN, THE DUO IS OUTSIDE, POUNDING ACROSS THE SAND...
THERE THEY ARE... RUNNING FOR THAT BOAT!
TAKE 'EM... TAKE 'EM HARD!

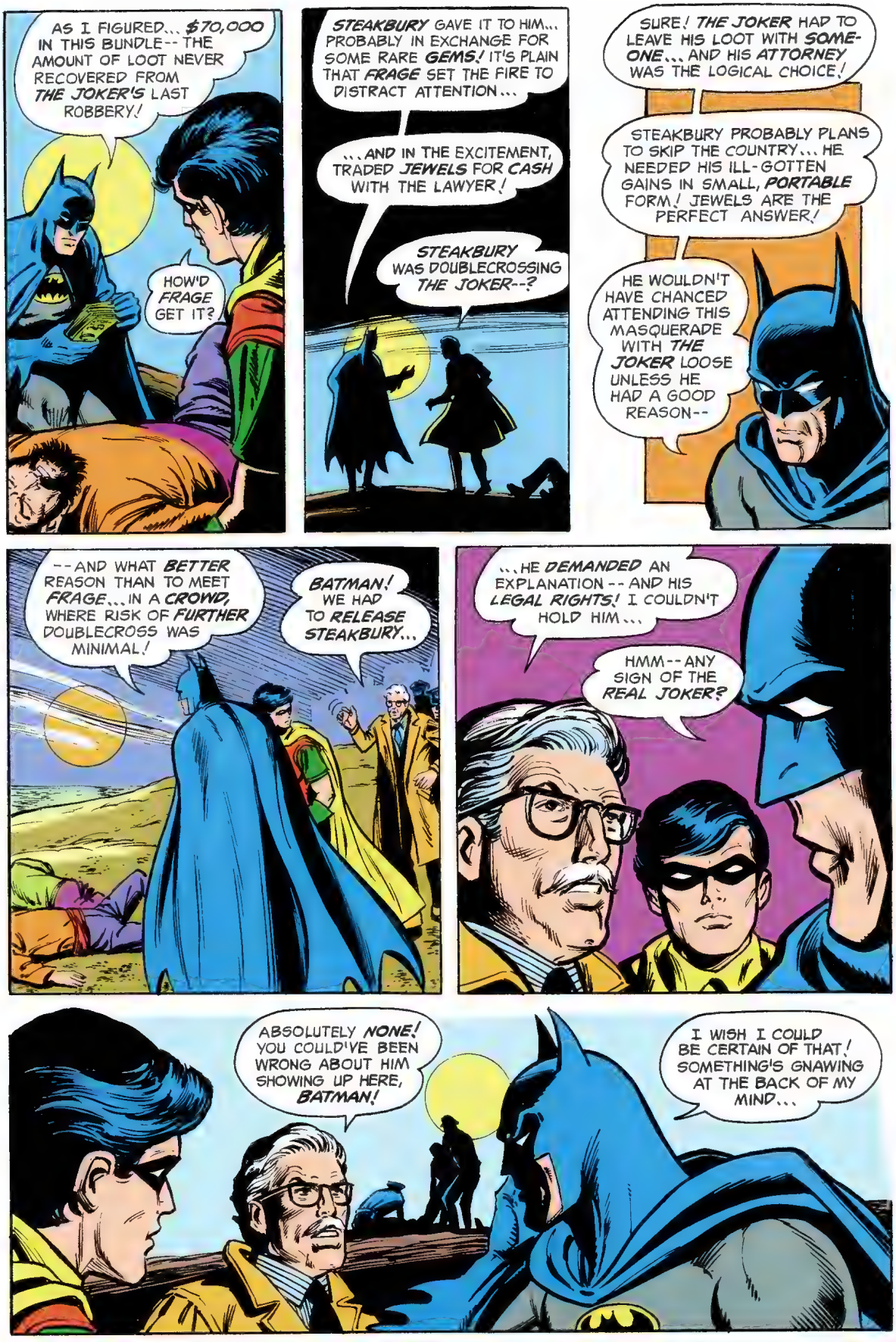
IT HAPPENS AS IT HAS HAPPENED SO OFTEN IN THE PAST...


...WITH ONLY THE COLD MOON AS WITNESS, THIS DEDICATED TWOSOME PITS TRAINING AND DETERMINATION AGAINST EVIL...

...A LAD WHO SEES IN EACH CRIMINAL THE ANIMAL GREED WHICH CAUSED THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS...


...AND A MAN WHOSE SINGLE PURPOSE IS TO SEEK OUT AND VANQUISH THE CORRUPTION WHICH DEBASES AND DESTROYS...


THERE IS THE SOUND OF HARSH BREATH...THE LAP OF THE GENTLE WAVES...A DREADFUL MEETING OF FIST AND FLESH...
...AND IT IS OVER...


AS I FIGURED... $70,000 IN THIS BUNDLE-- THE AMOUNT OF LOOT NEVER RECOVERED FROM THE JOKER'S LAST ROBBERY!
HOW'D FRAGE GET IT?
STEAKBURY GAVE IT TO HIM... PROBABLY IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME RARE GEMS! IT'S PLAIN THAT FRAGE SET THE FIRE TO DISTRACT ATTENTION...
...AND IN THE EXCITEMENT, TRADED JEWELS FOR CASH WITH THE LAWYER!
STEAKBURY WAS DOUBLECROSSING THE JOKER--?
SURE! THE JOKER HAD TO LEAVE HIS LOOT WITH SOMEONE... AND HIS ATTORNEY WAS THE LOGICAL CHOICE!
STEAKBURY PROBABLY PLANS TO SKIP THE COUNTRY... HE NEEDED HIS ILL-GOTTEN GAINS IN SMALL, PORTABLE FORM! JEWELS ARE THE PERFECT ANSWER!
HE WOULDN'T HAVE CHANCED ATTENDING THIS MASQUERADE WITH THE JOKER LOOSE UNLESS HE HAD A GOOD REASON--
--AND WHAT BETTER REASON THAN TO MEET FRAGE...IN A CROWD, WHERE RISK OF FURTHER DOUBLECROSS WAS MINIMAL!
BATMAN! WE HAD TO RELEASE STEAKBURY...
...HE DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION -- AND HIS LEGAL RIGHTS! I COULDN'T HOLD HIM...
HMM-- ANY SIGN OF THE REAL JOKER?
ABSOLUTELY NONE! YOU COULD'VE BEEN WRONG ABOUT HIM SHOWING UP HERE, BATMAN!
I WISH I COULD BE CERTAIN OF THAT! SOMETHING'S GNAWING AT THE BACK OF MY MIND...

COMMISSIONER... WAS THERE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF DR. TUGWELL'S DEATH?
WHY... NO! I CONSULTED WITH THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL! IT WAS DECIDED TO HUSH IT UP TILL THE JOKER WAS RECAPTURED...
...THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE SO BIZARRE...
THEN I'VE BEEN A BLIND IDIOT! THE JOKER'S BEEN RIGHT IN FRONT OF US ALL THIS TIME!
COME ON, ROBIN... WE MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE!
THE HOUR IS LATE! ONLY A FEW SCATTERED CELEBRANTS REMAIN IN THE PLAYGROUND AS THE BATMAN AND ROBIN RUSH TO A UNIFORMED OFFICER...
HAS STEAKBURY GONE YET?
DON'T THINK SO... HE WAS CALLED TO THE PHONE BY ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS...
...THAT ONE... OVER BY THE HOT DOG STAND!
ROBIN... GET TO THE TUNNEL OF LOVE! --AND HURRY!
A MAN'S LIFE IS AT STAKE!
HOT DOG
PUZZLED, THE TEEN WONDER HURRIES TO THE RIDE...
I WONDER WHAT BATMAN MEANT? WHOSE LIFE IS IN DANGER--?
TUNNEL OF LOVE
CLOSED
A SORT OF KNOCKING NOISE COMING FROM INSIDE...
THUMP
HARD TO MAKE ANYTHING OUT IN THIS DARK!
HMM--I CAN SEE ONE OF THE BOATS--!
IT LOOKS HALF-SUNKEN...
...AND THERE'S SOMEONE IN IT--

-- BOUND AND GAGGED!
STEADY, MISTER... I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE IN A MOMENT!
WE'LL TAKE THIS GAG FROM YOUR MOUTH AND REMOVE THOSE BONDS!
THANK GOD YOU ARRIVED--! IT WAS HORRIBLE!
HE... HE... TOLD ME I HAD A CALL... AND WHEN WE WERE OUT OF SIGHT, HE HIT ME... SAID HE'D HEARD ABOUT MY DEAL WITH FRAGE...
... PUT ME IN THE BOAT... BORED HOLES IN THE BOTTOM... LEFT ME TO DROWN...
...AND ALL THE WHILE, HE WAS LAUGHING... LAUGHING...
MEANWHILE, ON THE MIDWAY...
WOULD'JA HURRY IT UP, FUNNY-FACE? I WANTA CLOSE!
MY GOOD CHAP, SURELY YOU WON'T DENY ME THIS GOURMET TREAT?
YOU CAN EAT IT ON THE WAY BACK TO THE ASYLUM!
BATMAN-- WILL YOU KINDLY STOP HARRASSING ME? I AM A REPUTABLE ATTORNEY--
SAVE IT! YOU WON'T FOOL ME AGAIN-- JOKER! YOU MADE ONE BLUNDER--
... MENTIONING THE MAN YOU MURDERED-- DR. TUGWELL!
NOBODY BUT THE JOKER KNEW ABOUT HIM--!
MUSTARD

OOHHH... AREN'T YOU THE CLEVER ONE! A PITY YOU'RE NOT A WEE BIT MORE CLEVER!
IF YOU WERE, YOU WOULDN'T WEAR MUSTARD! IT ISN'T VERY BECOMING!
--AND IT DOES TEND TO MAKE ONE BLIND-- SHALL I SAY, BLIND AS A BAT? HA HA HA!
HOUSE OF MIRRORS
I CAN'T LET THAT MANIAC ESCAPE!
I'M STILL BURNING UP OVER NOT NAILING HIM HOURS AGO... IF I'D BEEN ALERT!
SO ANY FURTHER HARM HE DOES WILL BE MY FAULT--
--AND THAT'S SOMETHING I COULDN'T LIVE WITH!
HE MUST BE IN THIS MAZE SOMEPLACE...
HERE I AM, BATTY! COME AND GET ME-- ALL OF ME! HA HA HA!
WITH THAT REVOLVING LIGHT-MACHINE THROWING CONFUSING COLORS ONTO THE MIRRORS, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHAT IS REAL--
--AND WHAT IS IMAGE! AND UNTIL I DO... I'M A SITTING DUCK!
YOU REALIZE I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, EH, BATTY? BECAUSE I HATE YOU DEEPLY...
WAIT! THERE IS A WAY--! I CAN GET HIM... BEFORE HE GETS ME!

WHEN THE WHIRLING LIGHT POINTS IN THIS DIRECTION... ALL THE JOKERS BLINK! WHICH GIVES ME--
--THE CLUE I NEED TO THE REAL CLOWN!
CONFOUND YOU--!
I'LL NOT RETURN TO THAT PADDED CELL!
I'LL SQUEEZE THE BREATH FROM YOU FIRST--MUCH AS I LOATHE SUCH UNIMAGINATIVE MURDER METHODS!
ZAP!
POW!
BEAUTIFUL, BATMAN! THE NEATEST PUNCH YOU'VE EVER THROWN!
AND, AS USUAL, YOU'VE PROVEN YOURSELF A BRILLIANT DETECTIVE!
NOT REALLY, COMMISSIONER! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THE JOKER WAS DISGUISED AS AN ATTENDANT...
...AS SOON AS YOU SAID THE INVITATIONS WERE ALL ACCOUNTED FOR!
HOW ELSE COULD HE HAVE GOTTEN PAST YOUR MEN?
NOW... WHERE WAS I WHEN THE BAT-SIGNAL INTERRUPTED MY PATROL LAST NIGHT?
END

YOU COULD BE IN THE SUPERMAN MOVIE
--DETAILS INSIDE--

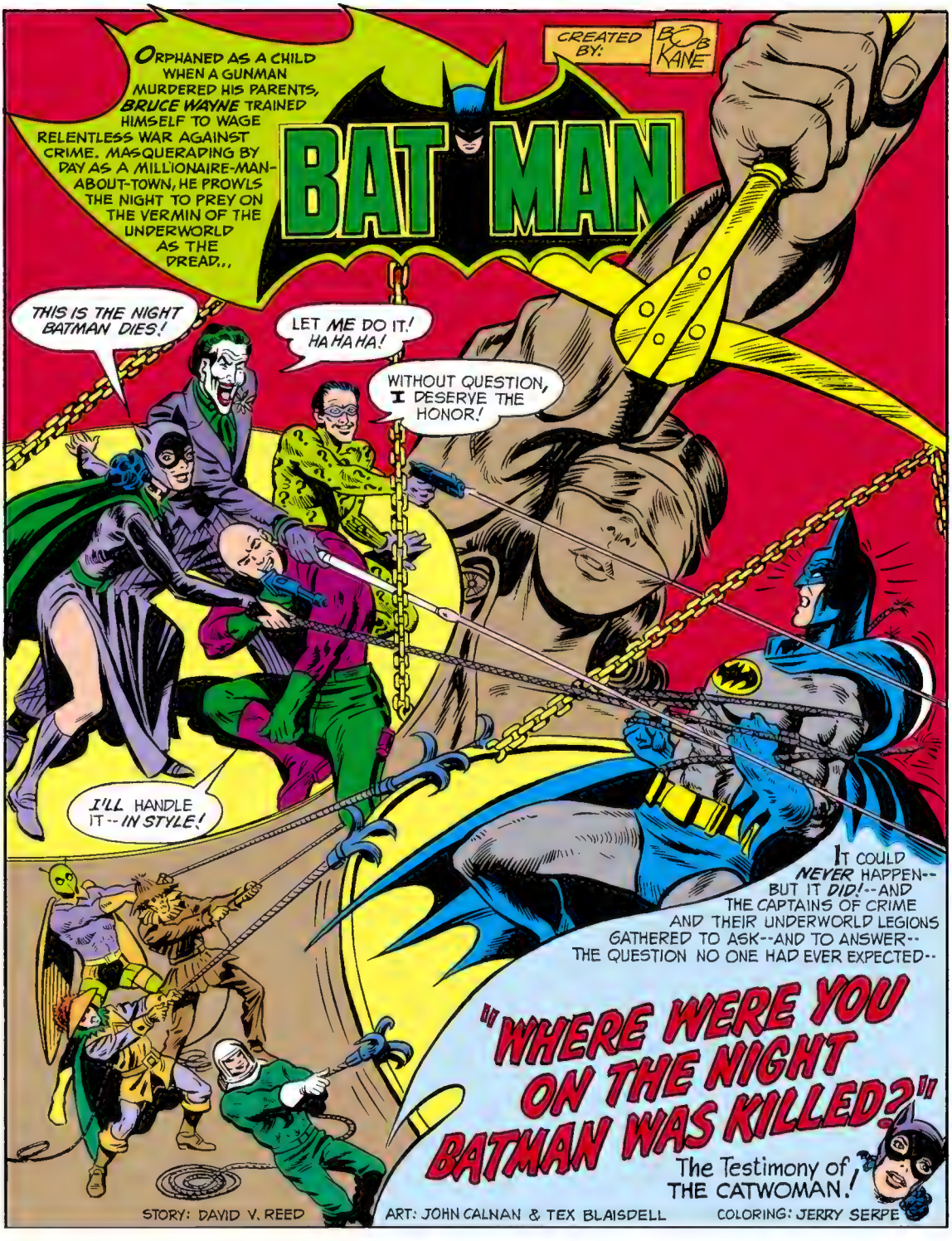
NO. 271 SEPT. 35¢
30430

BATMAN

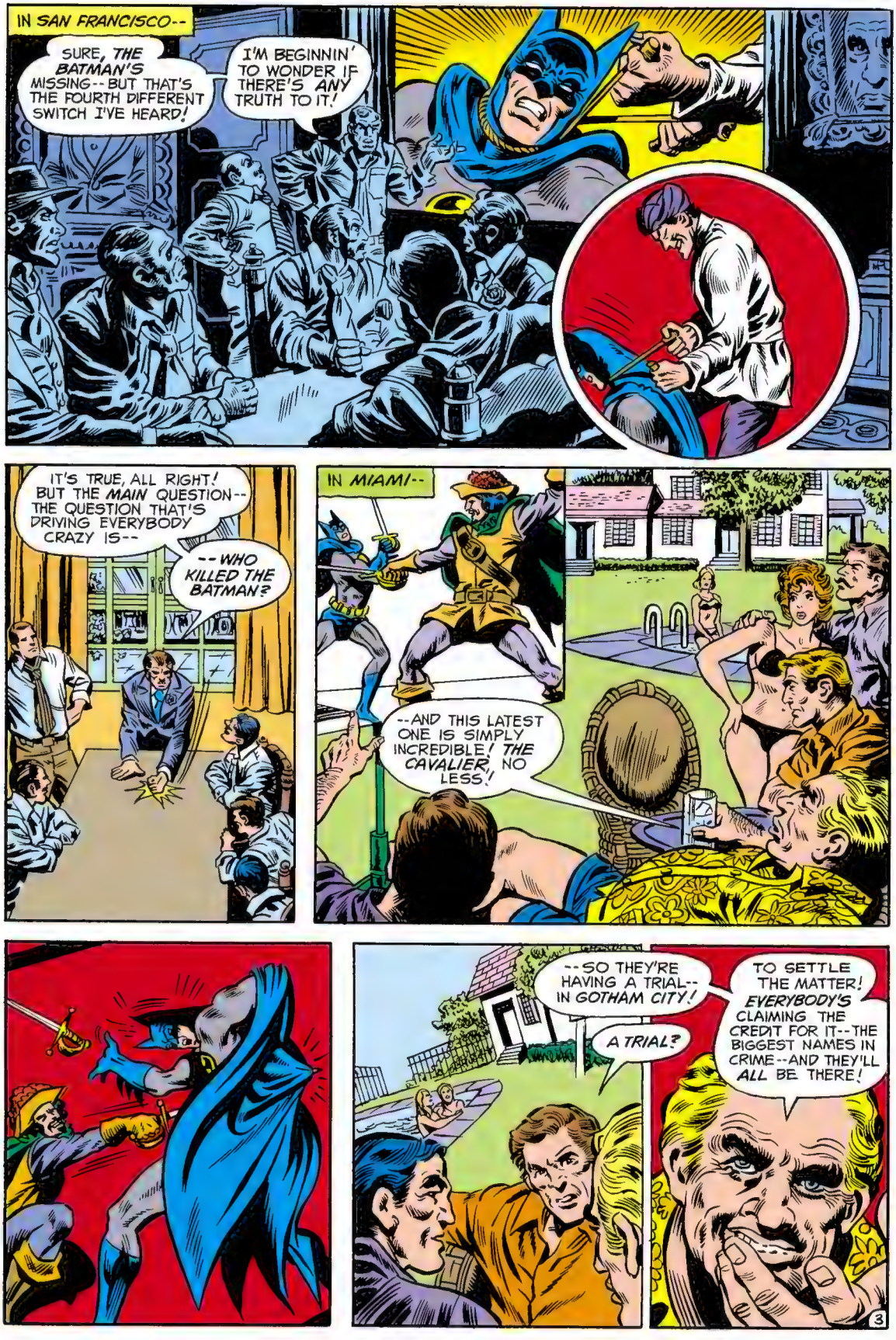
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

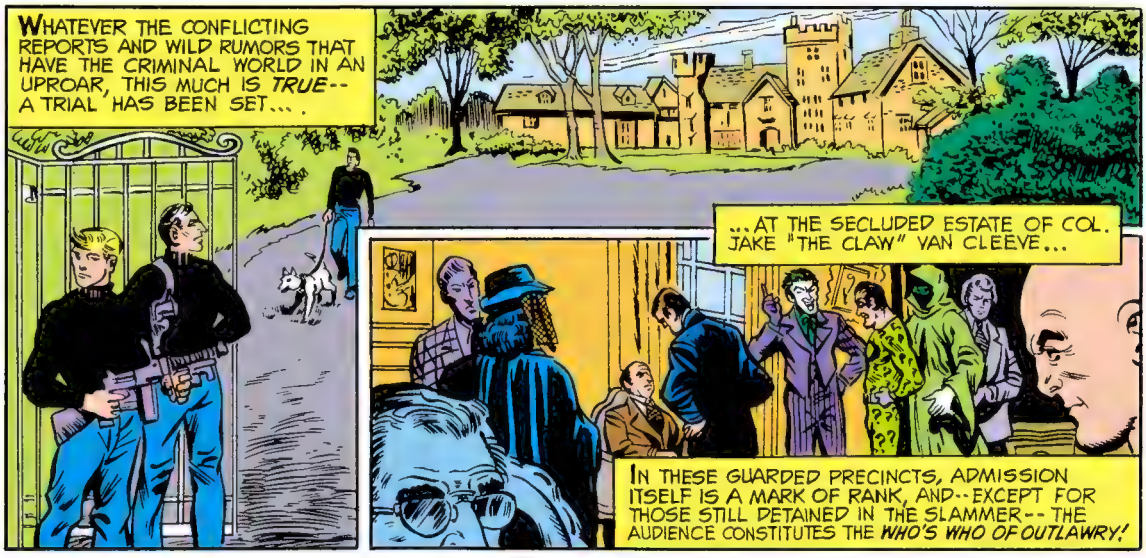
IN THIS ISSUE:
THE CATWOMAN!

WHO IS REALLY GUILTY?
THE RIDDLER?
THE CATWOMAN?
LEX LUTHOR?
THE JOKER?

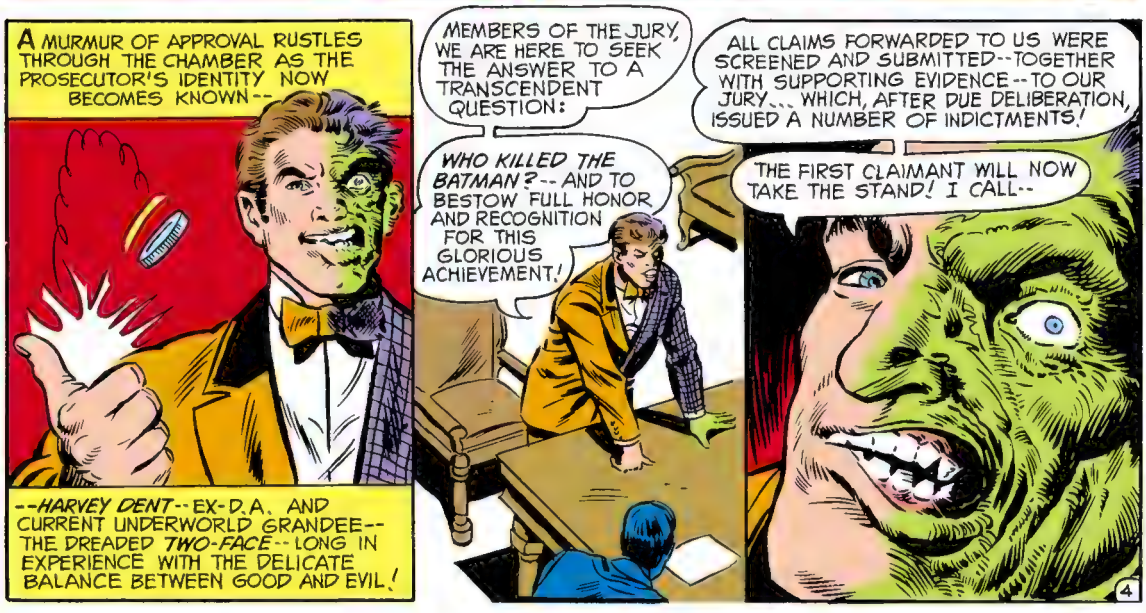

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN A GUNMAN MURDERED HIS PARENTS, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME. MASQUERADING BY DAY AS A MILLIONAIRE-MAN-ABOUT-TOWN, HE PROWLS THE NIGHT TO PREY ON THE VERMIN OF THE UNDERWORLD AS THE DREAD...
CREATED BY: BOB KANE
BAT MAN
THIS IS THE NIGHT BATMAN DIES!
LET ME DO IT! HA HA HA!
WITHOUT QUESTION, I DESERVE THE HONOR!
I'LL HANDLE IT -- IN STYLE!
IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN-- BUT IT DID!--AND THE CAPTAINS OF CRIME AND THEIR UNDERWORLD LEGIONS GATHERED TO ASK--AND TO ANSWER-- THE QUESTION NO ONE HAD EVER EXPECTED--
"WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?"
The Testimony of THE CATWOMAN!
STORY: DAVID V. REED
ART: JOHN CALNAN & TEX BLAISDELL
COLORING: JERRY SERPE

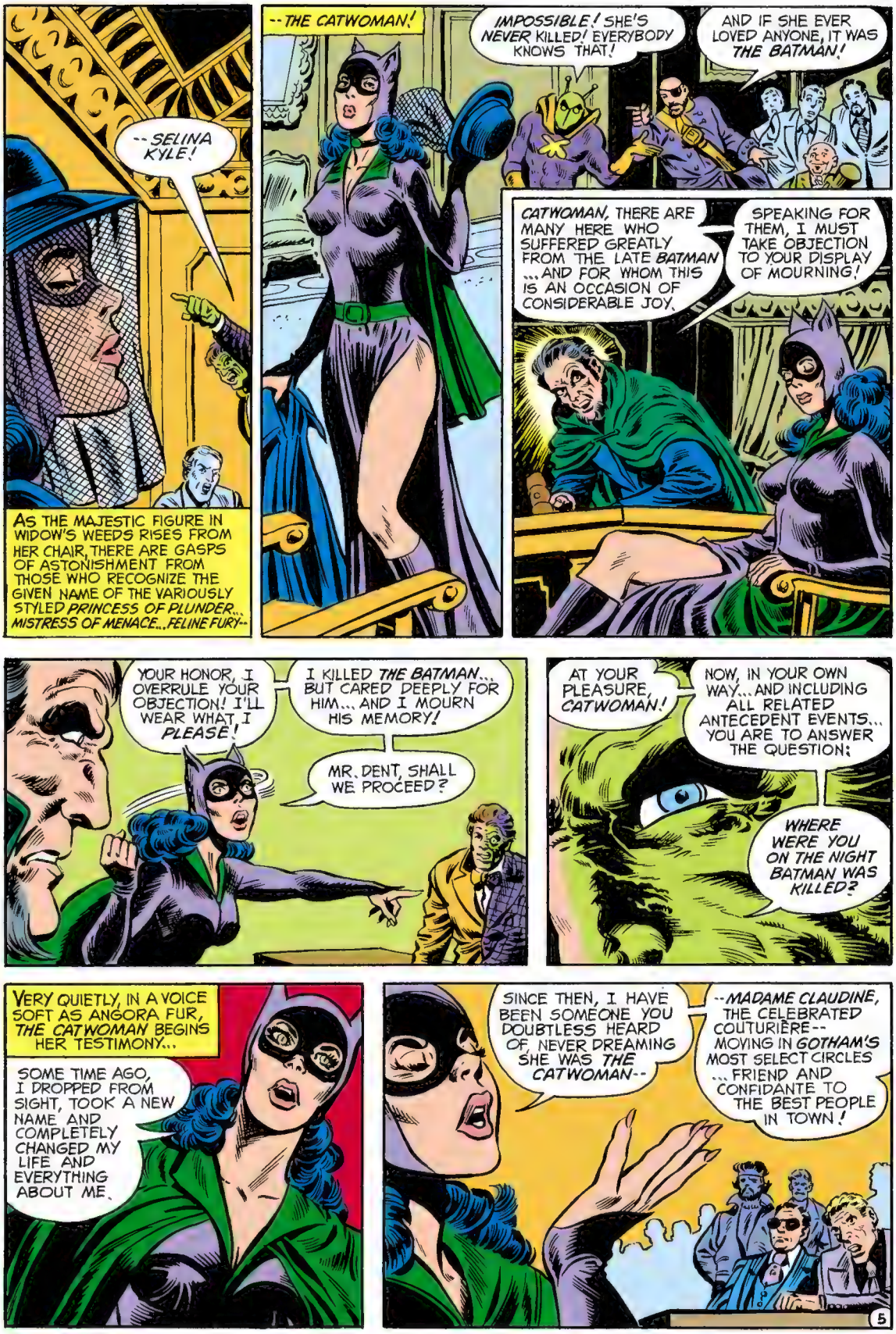
NO ONE KNEW HOW IT GOT STARTED... BUT SUDDENLY THE UNBELIEVABLE NEWS IS OUT-- AND IT SWEEPS THROUGH THE DARK DOMINIONS OF THE UNDERWORLD LIKE A FIRESTORM!
THE BATMAN IS DEAD
WHEREVER FELONS GATHER, THEY SPEAK OF NOTHING ELSE-- BUT EVERYWHERE THE STORY IS DIFFERENT!
IN CHICAGO--
THEY HAD BATS CORNERED ON THE ROOF-- FORTY FLIGHTS UP AND NO PLACE TO GO--!
IN BOSTON--
IN NEW ORLEANS--
2


IN SAN FRANCISCO--
SURE, THE BATMAN'S MISSING--BUT THAT'S THE FOURTH DIFFERENT SWITCH I'VE HEARD!
I'M BEGINNIN' TO WONDER IF THERE'S ANY TRUTH TO IT!
IT'S TRUE, ALL RIGHT! BUT THE MAIN QUESTION--THE QUESTION THAT'S DRIVING EVERYBODY CRAZY IS--
--WHO KILLED THE BATMAN?
IN MIAMI--
--AND THIS LATEST ONE IS SIMPLY INCREDIBLE! THE CAVALIER, NO LESS!
--SO THEY'RE HAVING A TRIAL--IN GOTHAM CITY!
A TRIAL?
TO SETTLE THE MATTER! EVERYBODY'S CLAIMING THE CREDIT FOR IT--THE BIGGEST NAMES IN CRIME--AND THEY'LL ALL BE THERE!


WHATEVER THE CONFLICTING REPORTS AND WILD RUMORS THAT HAVE THE CRIMINAL WORLD IN AN UPROAR, THIS MUCH IS *TRUE*-- A TRIAL HAS BEEN SET... .
...AT THE SECLUDED ESTATE OF COL. JAKE "THE CLAW" VAN CLEEVE...
IN THESE GUARDED PRECINCTS, ADMISSION ITSELF IS A MARK OF RANK, AND--EXCEPT FOR THOSE STILL DETAINED IN THE SLAMMER-- THE AUDIENCE CONSTITUTES THE *WHO'S WHO OF OUTLAWRY!*

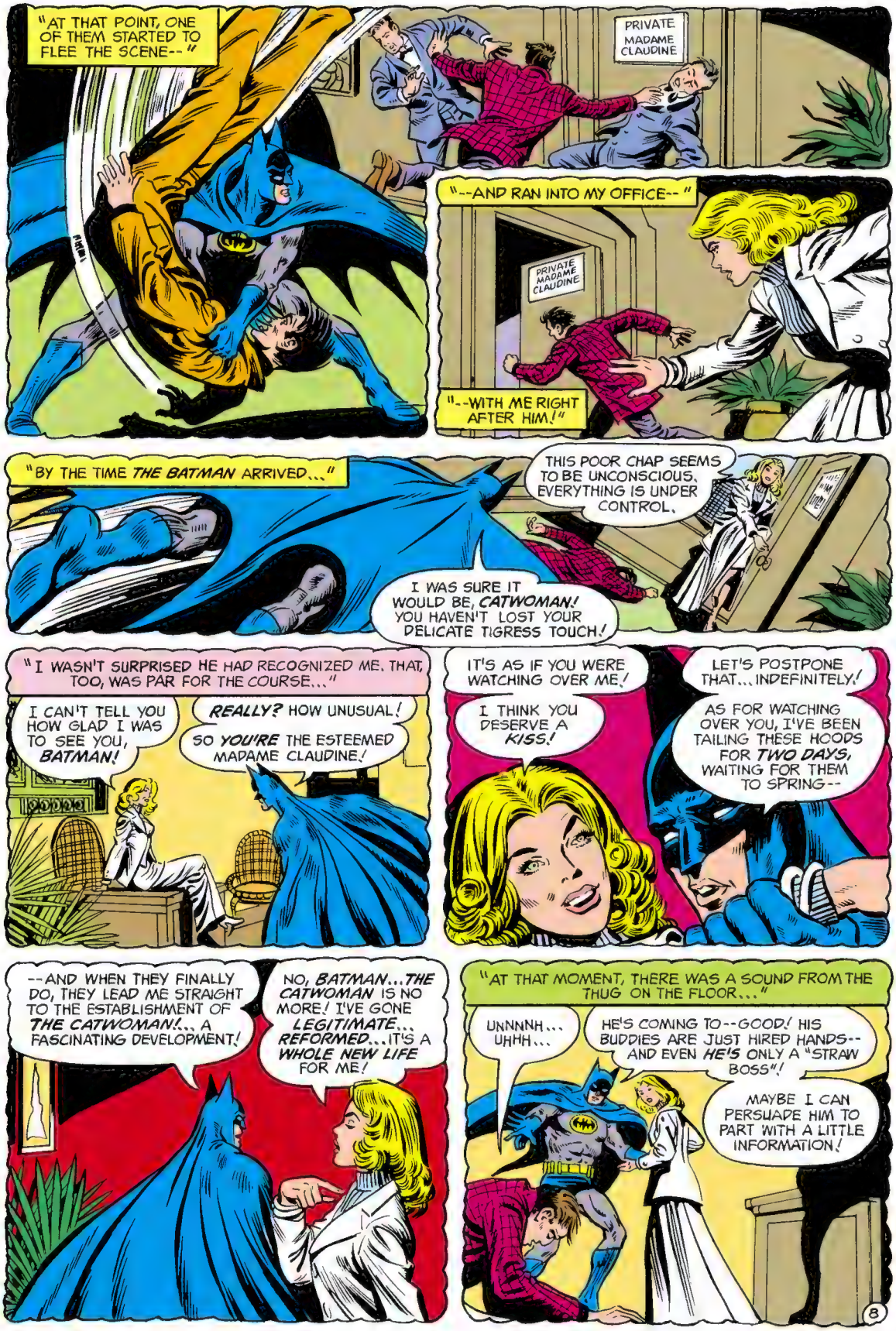
THE JURORS--ILLUSTRIOUS CUT-THROATS ALL--THE *MAD HATTER, THE SPOOK, POISON IVY, THE SCARECROW, SIGNALMAN* AND *MR. FREEZE*...
AND THE *JUDGE*-- THAT INFAMOUS MASTER OF LEGAL INTRICACIES-- *RÂS AL GHŪL*...
THE TRIAL TO FIX RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KILLING OF *THE BATMAN* WILL NOW BEGIN!
MR. PROSECUTOR, YOU MAY ADDRESS THE JURY!

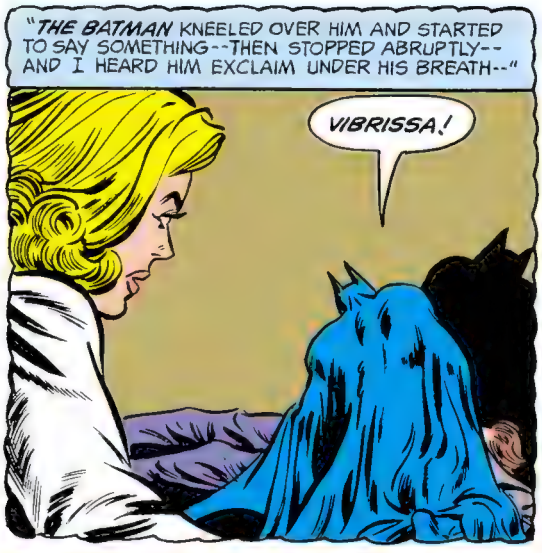

A MURMUR OF APPROVAL RUSTLES THROUGH THE CHAMBER AS THE PROSECUTOR'S IDENTITY NOW BECOMES KNOWN--
--*HARVEY DENT*--EX-D.A. AND CURRENT UNDERWORLD GRANDEE-- THE DREADED *TWO-FACE*--LONG IN EXPERIENCE WITH THE DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL!
MEMBERS OF THE JURY, WE ARE HERE TO SEEK THE ANSWER TO A TRANSCENDENT QUESTION:
WHO KILLED THE BATMAN?--AND TO BESTOW FULL HONOR AND RECOGNITION FOR THIS GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT!
ALL CLAIMS FORWARDED TO US WERE SCREENED AND SUBMITTED--TOGETHER WITH SUPPORTING EVIDENCE--TO OUR JURY... WHICH, AFTER DUE DELIBERATION, ISSUED A NUMBER OF INDICTMENTS!
THE FIRST CLAIMANT WILL NOW TAKE THE STAND! I CALL--

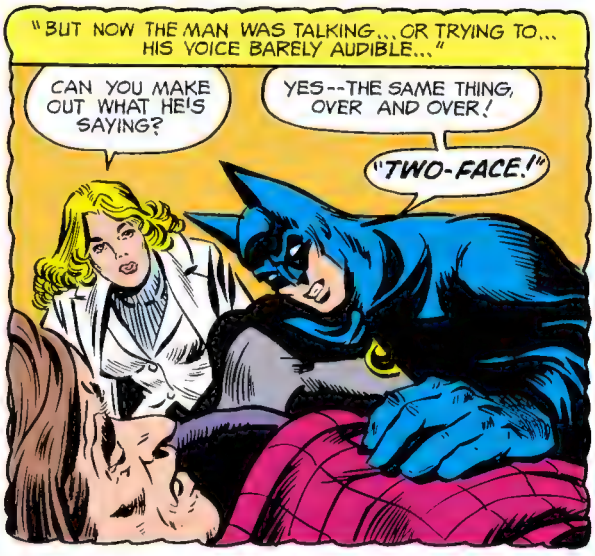

--SELINA KYLE!
AS THE MAJESTIC FIGURE IN WIDOW'S WEEDS RISES FROM HER CHAIR, THERE ARE GASPS OF ASTONISHMENT FROM THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THE GIVEN NAME OF THE VARIOUSLY STYLED PRINCESS OF PLUNDER... MISTRESS OF MENACE...FELINE FURY--
--THE CATWOMAN!
IMPOSSIBLE! SHE'S NEVER KILLED! EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT!
AND IF SHE EVER LOVED ANYONE, IT WAS THE BATMAN!
CATWOMAN, THERE ARE MANY HERE WHO SUFFERED GREATLY FROM THE LATE BATMAN ...AND FOR WHOM THIS IS AN OCCASION OF CONSIDERABLE JOY.
SPEAKING FOR THEM, I MUST TAKE OBJECTION TO YOUR DISPLAY OF MOURNING!
YOUR HONOR, I OVERRULE YOUR OBJECTION! I'LL WEAR WHAT I PLEASE!
I KILLED THE BATMAN... BUT CARED DEEPLY FOR HIM... AND I MOURN HIS MEMORY!
MR. DENT, SHALL WE PROCEED?
AT YOUR PLEASURE, CATWOMAN!
NOW, IN YOUR OWN WAY... AND INCLUDING ALL RELATED ANTECEDENT EVENTS... YOU ARE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION:
WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?
VERY QUIETLY, IN A VOICE SOFT AS ANGORA FUR, THE CATWOMAN BEGINS HER TESTIMONY...
SOME TIME AGO, I DROPPED FROM SIGHT, TOOK A NEW NAME AND COMPLETELY CHANGED MY LIFE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT ME.
SINCE THEN, I HAVE BEEN SOMEONE YOU DOUBTLESS HEARD OF, NEVER DREAMING SHE WAS THE CATWOMAN--
--MADAME CLAUDINE, THE CELEBRATED COUTURIÈRE-- MOVING IN GOTHAM'S MOST SELECT CIRCLES ... FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE TO THE BEST PEOPLE IN TOWN!

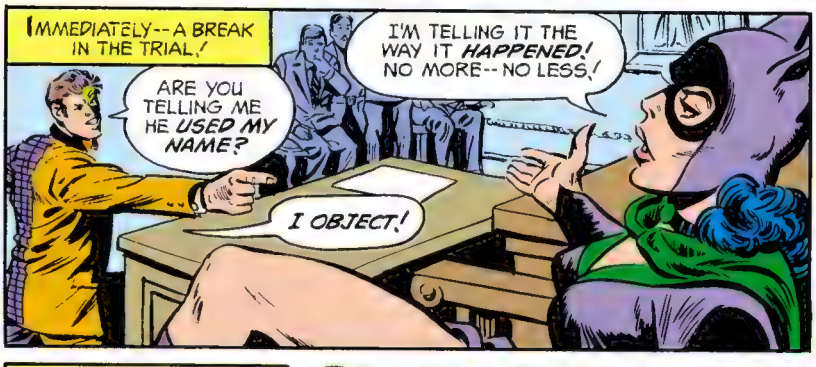
"EXACTLY THREE WEEKS AGO TONIGHT, I WAS HAVING AN EXCLUSIVE FASHION SHOW FOR A GLITTERING ASSEMBLAGE OF NOTABLES... IN THE ROTUNDA OF MY SALON..."
"EVERYTHING WAS GOING BEAUTIFULLY, WHEN SUDDENLY..."
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS A STICK-UP! REMAIN CALM AND NO ONE WILL GET HURT!
"BUT AS WE STARTED TO RAISE OUR HANDS..."
NO ONE BUT YOU--
--AND YOU--
--AND YOU!
6

"IT WAS SHEER CATACLYSMIC CATASTROPHE FOR THOSE CROOKS -- THE BATMAN AT HIS BEST -- DOING HIS THING!"
HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS TO WATCH HIM FIGHT -- AND FOR ONCE NOT BE PART OF IT!


"AT THAT POINT, ONE OF THEM STARTED TO FLEE THE SCENE--"
PRIVATE MADAME CLAUDINE
"--AND RAN INTO MY OFFICE--"
PRIVATE MADAME CLAUDINE
"--WITH ME RIGHT AFTER HIM!"
"BY THE TIME THE BATMAN ARRIVED..."
THIS POOR CHAP SEEMS TO BE UNCONSCIOUS. EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL.
I WAS SURE IT WOULD BE, CATWOMAN! YOU HAVEN'T LOST YOUR DELICATE TIGRESS TOUCH!
"I WASN'T SURPRISED HE HAD RECOGNIZED ME. THAT, TOO, WAS PAR FOR THE COURSE..."
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW GLAD I WAS TO SEE YOU, BATMAN!
REALLY? HOW UNUSUAL!
SO YOU'RE THE ESTEEMED MADAME CLAUDINE!
IT'S AS IF YOU WERE WATCHING OVER ME!
I THINK YOU DESERVE A KISS!
LET'S POSTPONE THAT... INDEFINITELY!
AS FOR WATCHING OVER YOU, I'VE BEEN TAILING THESE HOODS FOR TWO DAYS, WAITING FOR THEM TO SPRING--
--AND WHEN THEY FINALLY DO, THEY LEAD ME STRAIGHT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CATWOMAN!... A FASCINATING DEVELOPMENT!
NO, BATMAN... THE CATWOMAN IS NO MORE! I'VE GONE LEGITIMATE... REFORMED... IT'S A WHOLE NEW LIFE FOR ME!
"AT THAT MOMENT, THERE WAS A SOUND FROM THE THUG ON THE FLOOR..."
UNNNNH... UHHH...
HE'S COMING TO--GOOD! HIS BUDDIES ARE JUST HIRED HANDS--AND EVEN HE'S ONLY A "STRAW BOSS"!
MAYBE I CAN PERSUADE HIM TO PART WITH A LITTLE INFORMATION!

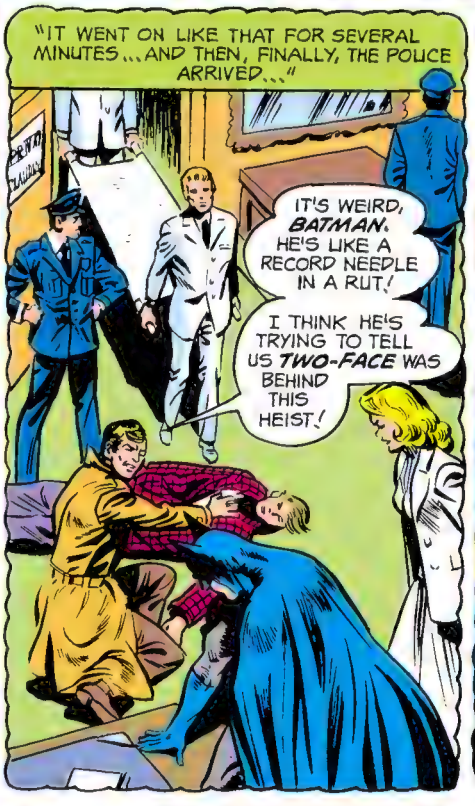

"THE BATMAN KNEELED OVER HIM AND STARTED TO SAY SOMETHING--THEN STOPPED ABRUPTLY-- AND I HEARD HIM EXCLAIM UNDER HIS BREATH--"
VIBRISSA!


"BUT NOW THE MAN WAS TALKING...OR TRYING TO... HIS VOICE BARELY AUDIBLE..."
CAN YOU MAKE OUT WHAT HE'S SAYING?
YES--THE SAME THING, OVER AND OVER!
"TWO-FACE!"

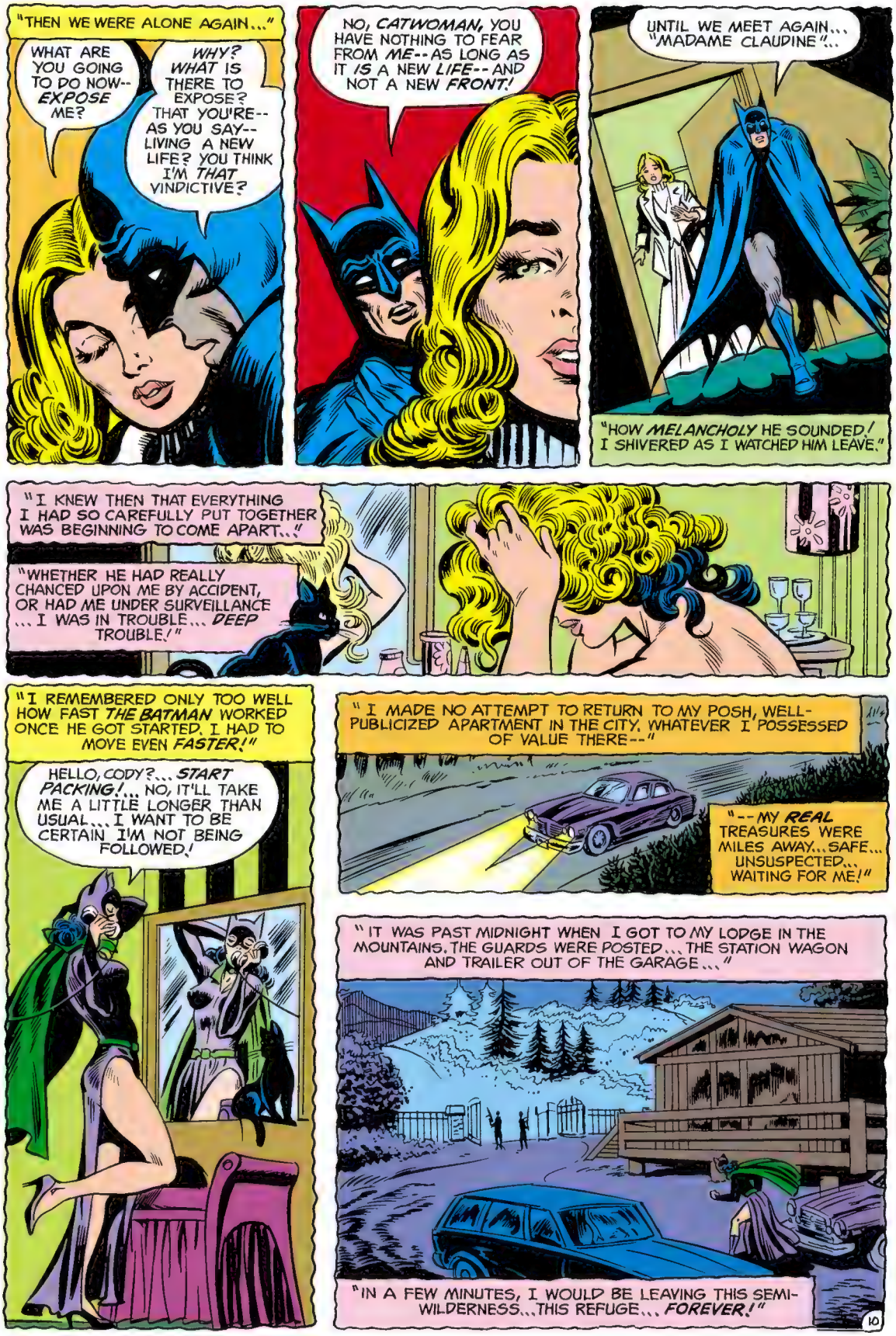

IMMEDIATELY--A BREAK IN THE TRIAL!
ARE YOU TELLING ME HE USED MY NAME?
I'M TELLING IT THE WAY IT HAPPENED! NO MORE--NO LESS!
I OBJECT!

MR. PROSECUTOR, GIVE ME YOUR COIN!

JUDGE GHŪL TAKES THE FAMOUS TWO-HEADED SILVER DOLLAR THAT RESOLVES ALL MAJOR DECISIONS FOR ITS OWNER--ONE SIDE WHOLE, THE OTHER SCARRED--AND TOSSES IT!
EVIL WINS!--OBJECTION OVERRULED!
AFTER WHICH THE CATWOMAN QUIETLY RESUMES...

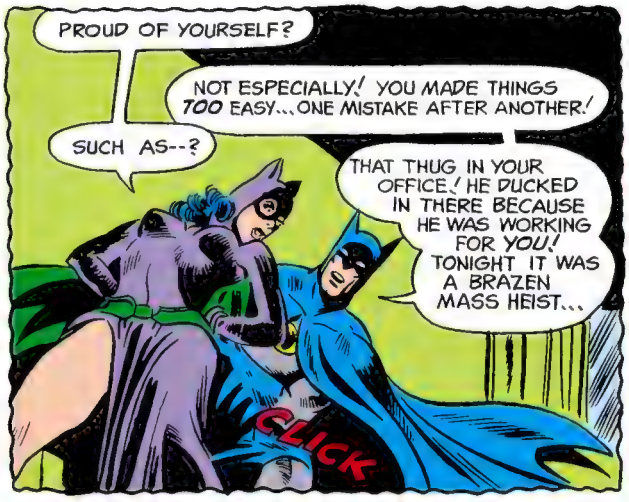

"IT WENT ON LIKE THAT FOR SEVERAL MINUTES...AND THEN, FINALLY, THE POLICE ARRIVED..."
IT'S WEIRD, BATMAN. HE'S LIKE A RECORD NEEDLE IN A RUT!
I THINK HE'S TRYING TO TELL US TWO-FACE WAS BEHIND THIS HEIST!

WELL, LIEUTENANT, IF YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE'S A VERY PUZZLING QUESTION TO ANSWER--WHY SHOULD HE BE TELLING US?
ANYWAY, STAY WITH HIM AT THE HOSPITAL, I'LL JOIN YOU THERE SHORTLY.


"THEN WE WERE ALONE AGAIN..."
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW-- EXPOSE ME?
WHY? WHAT IS THERE TO EXPOSE? THAT YOU'RE-- AS YOU SAY-- LIVING A NEW LIFE? YOU THINK I'M THAT VINDICTIVE?
NO, CATWOMAN, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME-- AS LONG AS IT IS A NEW LIFE-- AND NOT A NEW FRONT!
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN... "MADAME CLAUDINE"...
"HOW MELANCHOLY HE SOUNDED! I SHIVERED AS I WATCHED HIM LEAVE."
"I KNEW THEN THAT EVERYTHING I HAD SO CAREFULLY PUT TOGETHER WAS BEGINNING TO COME APART..."
"WHETHER HE HAD REALLY CHANCED UPON ME BY ACCIDENT, OR HAD ME UNDER SURVEILLANCE ... I WAS IN TROUBLE... DEEP TROUBLE!"
"I REMEMBERED ONLY TOO WELL HOW FAST THE BATMAN WORKED ONCE HE GOT STARTED. I HAD TO MOVE EVEN FASTER!"
HELLO, CODY?... START PACKING!... NO, IT'LL TAKE ME A LITTLE LONGER THAN USUAL... I WANT TO BE CERTAIN I'M NOT BEING FOLLOWED!
"I MADE NO ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO MY POSH, WELL-PUBLICIZED APARTMENT IN THE CITY. WHATEVER I POSSESSED OF VALUE THERE--"
"--MY REAL TREASURES WERE MILES AWAY... SAFE... UNSUSPECTED... WAITING FOR ME!"
"IT WAS PAST MIDNIGHT WHEN I GOT TO MY LODGE IN THE MOUNTAINS. THE GUARDS WERE POSTED... THE STATION WAGON AND TRAILER OUT OF THE GARAGE..."
"IN A FEW MINUTES, I WOULD BE LEAVING THIS SEMI-WILDERNESS... THIS REFUGE... FOREVER!"
10

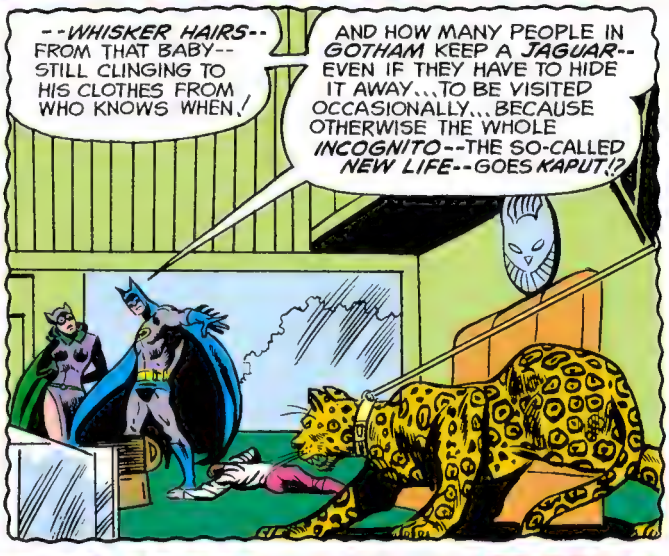
"INSIDE, CODY WAS WAITING... ALL WAS IN READINESS..."
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, CODY. I'LL CALL YOU AS SOON AS I'M RELOCATED!
WHAT WENT WRONG?
THE BATMAN! AND HE'LL BE HUNTING ME ONE SECOND AFTER BONGO FINDS HIS TONGUE AGAIN!
SOONER THAN THAT--MADAME CLAUDINE!
"I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW HE GOT THERE-- OR WHERE HE CAME FROM--"
"--BUT THE NEXT INSTANT--"
"--WE WERE FIGHTING DESPERATELY..."
WISH
WHUMP

"NEVER HAD I SEEN THE BATMAN UNLEASH SUCH FURY... SUCH MIGHT!"
"IT WAS PATHETIC, REALLY--WE WERE NO MATCH AT ALL FOR HIM!"
"AND NEITHER WERE MY OUTSIDE GUARDS-- THEIR WEAPONS USELESS WITH CODY AND ME SO DANGEROUSLY CLOSE!"
"IT WAS OVER IN A HURRY..."
12


PROUD OF YOURSELF?
NOT ESPECIALLY! YOU MADE THINGS TOO EASY...ONE MISTAKE AFTER ANOTHER!
SUCH AS--?
THAT THUG IN YOUR OFFICE! HE DUCKED IN THERE BECAUSE HE WAS WORKING FOR YOU! TONIGHT IT WAS A BRAZEN MASS HEIST...
CLICK

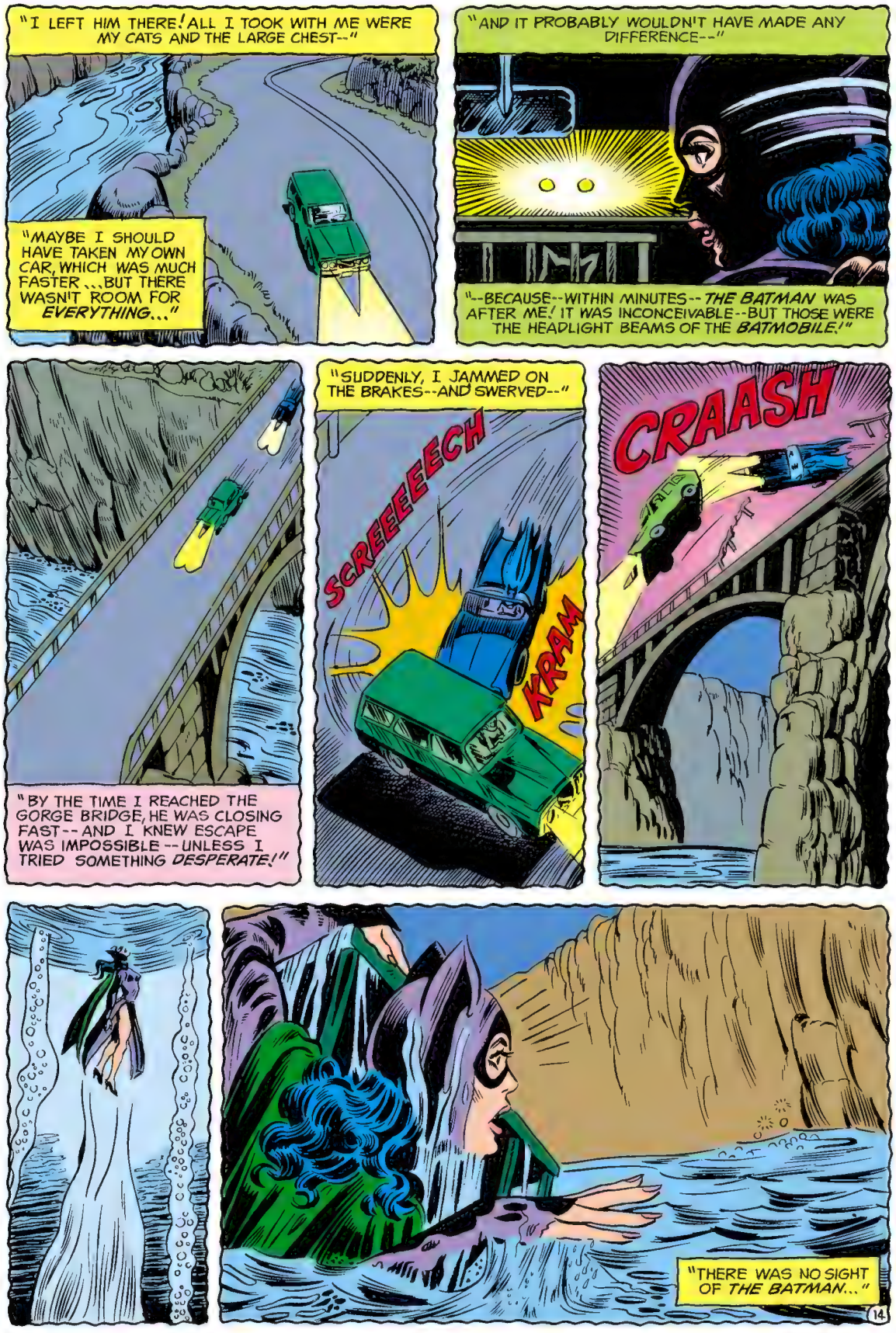
...BUT YOU'VE BEEN RIPPING OFF YOUR CELEBRITY CLIENTS ALL ALONG, BASED ON THE INFORMATION YOU COULD GET!
THAT POOR DEVIL EXPECTED HELP FROM YOU--NOT BEING INJECTED WITH A DRUG... APPARENTLY ONE OF YOUR LATEST WEAPONS...

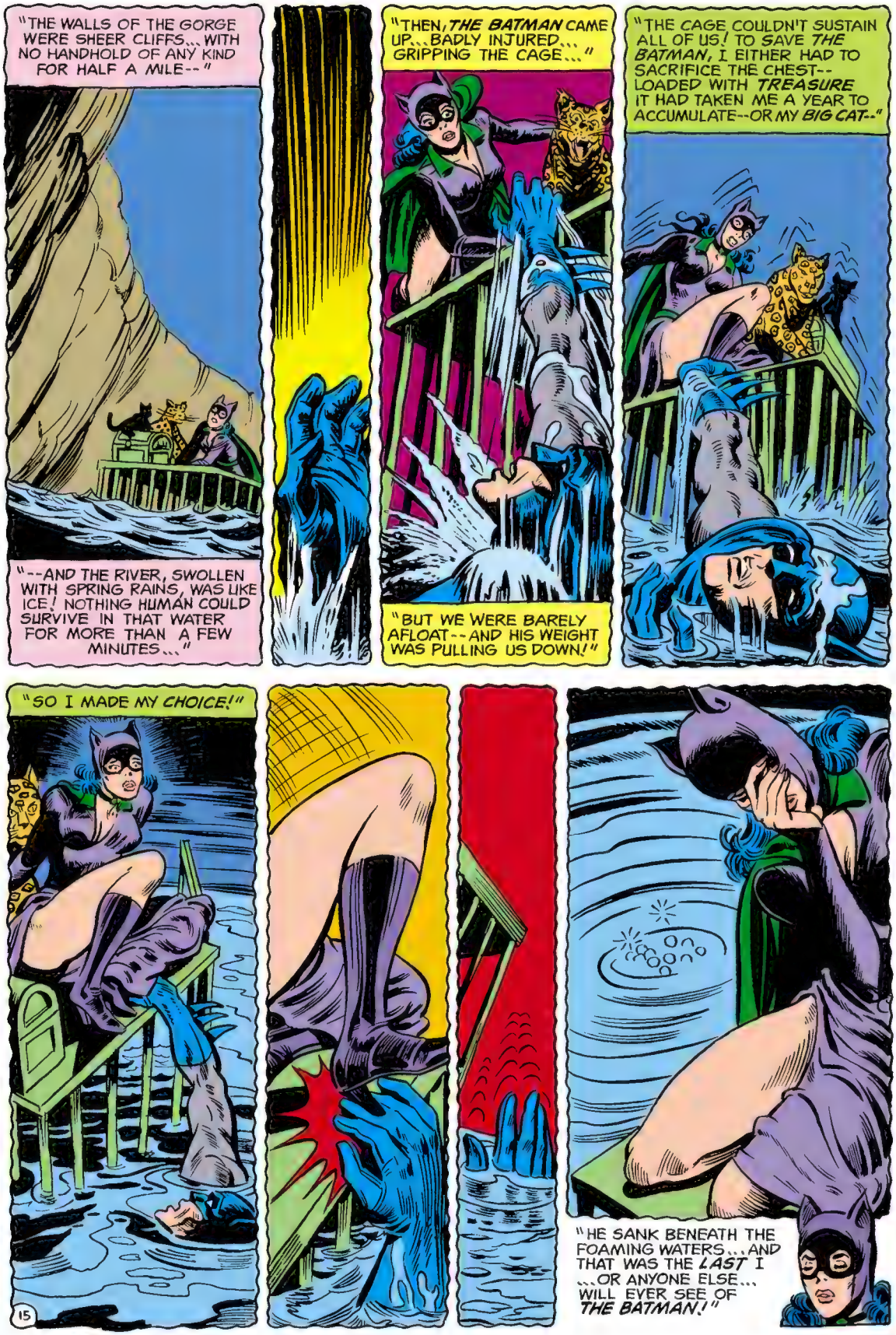
...THAT INSTANTLY PRODUCED CATAPHASIA IN HIM--THE CONSTANT REPITITION OF THE SAME WORD! THAT'S WHY HE KEPT ACCUSING YOU--CALLING YOU TWO-FACED!
AND TO MAKE MATTERS EVEN MORE CLEAR, I FOUND THREE LONG VIBRISSA--


--WHISKER HAIRS--FROM THAT BABY--STILL CLINGING TO HIS CLOTHES FROM WHO KNOWS WHEN!
AND HOW MANY PEOPLE IN GOTHAM KEEP A JAGUAR--EVEN IF THEY HAVE TO HIDE IT AWAY...TO BE VISITED OCCASIONALLY...BECAUSE OTHERWISE THE WHOLE INCOGNITO--THE SO-CALLED NEW LIFE--GOES KAPUT!?

KRUK
"--BUT I'D HAD A FOURTH GUARD ON THE PREMISES--"

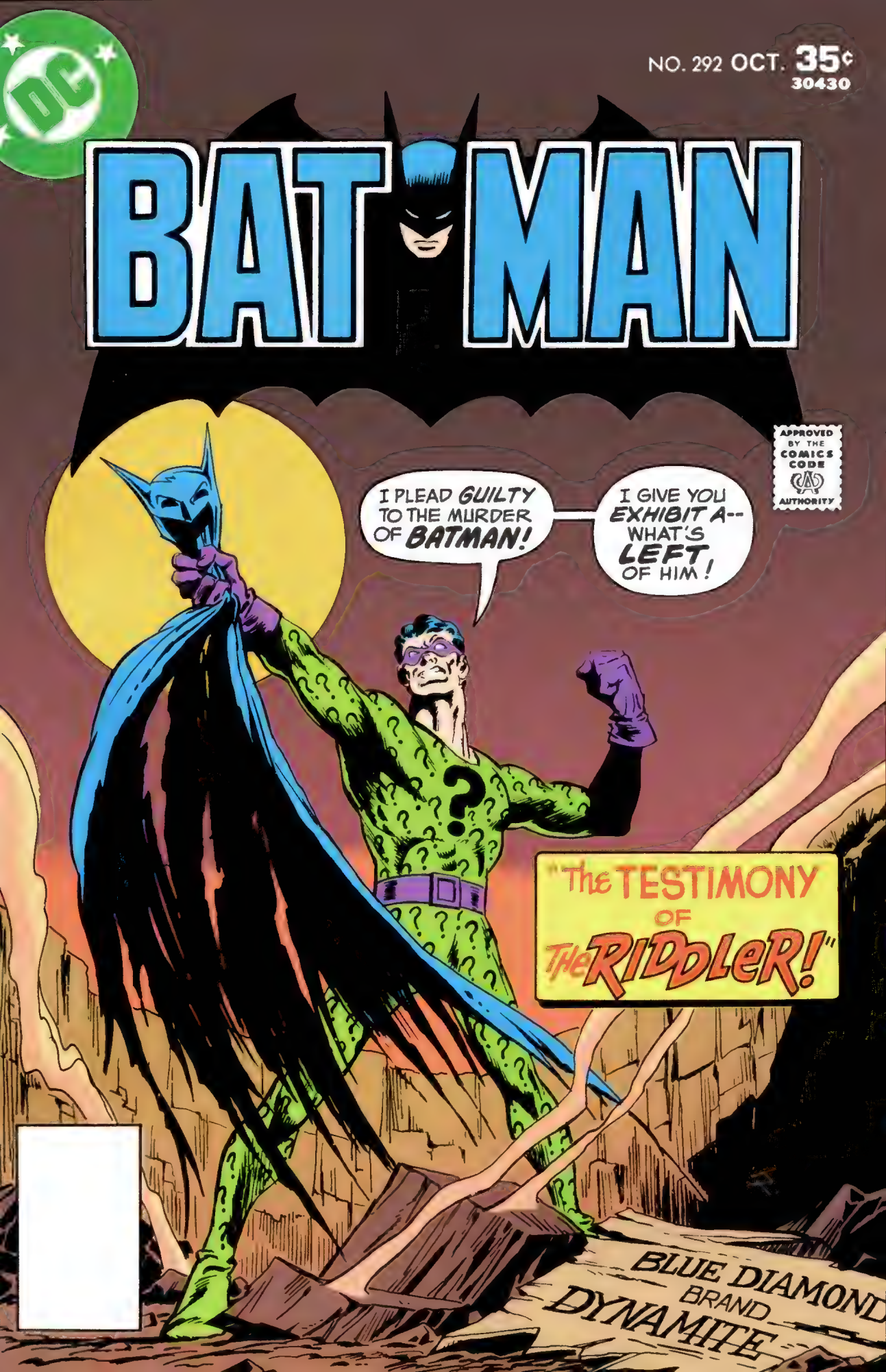
RIGHT!--KAPUT!
WHUMP

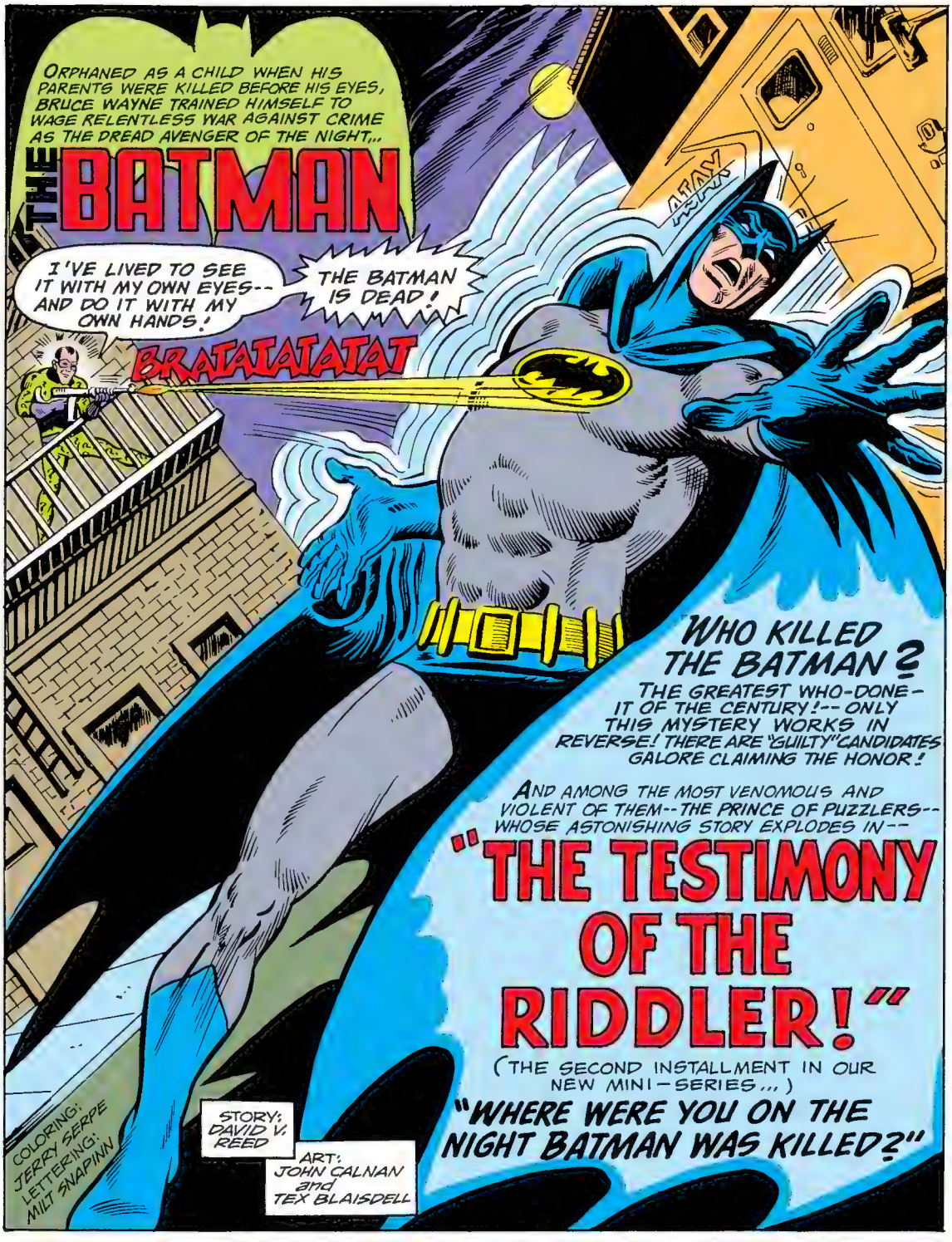

"I LEFT HIM THERE! ALL I TOOK WITH ME WERE MY CATS AND THE LARGE CHEST--"
"MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN MY OWN CAR, WHICH WAS MUCH FASTER...BUT THERE WASN'T ROOM FOR EVERYTHING..."
"AND IT PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE--"
"--BECAUSE--WITHIN MINUTES--THE BATMAN WAS AFTER ME! IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE--BUT THOSE WERE THE HEADLIGHT BEAMS OF THE BATMOBILE!"
"BY THE TIME I REACHED THE GORGE BRIDGE, HE WAS CLOSING FAST--AND I KNEW ESCAPE WAS IMPOSSIBLE--UNLESS I TRIED SOMETHING DESPERATE!"
"SUDDENLY, I JAMMED ON THE BRAKES--AND SWERVED--"
SCREEEEECH
KRAM
CRAASH
"THERE WAS NO SIGHT OF THE BATMAN..."
14


"THE WALLS OF THE GORGE WERE SHEER CLIFFS... WITH NO HANDHOLD OF ANY KIND FOR HALF A MILE--"
"--AND THE RIVER, SWOLLEN WITH SPRING RAINS, WAS LIKE ICE! NOTHING HUMAN COULD SURVIVE IN THAT WATER FOR MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES..."
"THEN, THE BATMAN CAME UP...BADLY INJURED... GRIPPING THE CAGE..."
"BUT WE WERE BARELY AFLOAT--AND HIS WEIGHT WAS PULLING US DOWN!"
"THE CAGE COULDN'T SUSTAIN ALL OF US! TO SAVE THE BATMAN, I EITHER HAD TO SACRIFICE THE CHEST--LOADED WITH TREASURE IT HAD TAKEN ME A YEAR TO ACCUMULATE--OR MY BIG CAT--"
"SO I MADE MY CHOICE!"
"HE SANK BENEATH THE FOAMING WATERS...AND THAT WAS THE LAST I ...OR ANYONE ELSE... WILL EVER SEE OF THE BATMAN!"
15

THERE IS A HUSH IN THE CROWDED CHAMBER AS THE CATWOMAN CONCLUDES HER TESTIMONY. FOR A MOMENT, ALL IS STILL...NO ONE MOVES...
...UNTIL--
A HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE TALE, FULL OF FANCY TOUCHES--INCLUDING DRAGGING ME INTO IT AS AN ADDED FILLIP!
AND THAT NONSENSE ABOUT CATAPHASIA--
NONSENSE, TWO-FACE? HERE--THE DRUG DOESN'T HAVE TO BE INJECTED--SWALLOW THIS LITTLE PILL!
I SEE NO NEED FOR SUCH HEROICS! WHAT IF IT'S POISON?
STILL TALKING OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF YOUR MOUTH! COULD I LEAVE HERE ALIVE IF I POISONED YOU?
ENOUGH! MR. PROSECUTOR, CONTINUE!
THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR! NOW, MY FRIENDS, WE MUST ASK OURSELVES--WHY HAS THE CATWOMAN COME HERE--BLOWING A MAGNIFICENT COVER--GIVING UP A FIRST-RATE RACKET?
BECAUSE SHE'S GAMBLING ON DOING MUCH, MUCH BETTER THAN THAT!
THE WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT SHE NEVER KILLS HAS ALWAYS LIMITED HER RANGE AND EFFECTIVENESS!
BUT IF HER CLAIM IS HONORED HERE--THE BEST BRAINS, THE BEST KILLERS, WILL FLOCK TO THE UNDISPUTED QUEEN OF CRIME!
SO, WITH THE BATMAN DEAD--
--WHY NOT GAMBLE AND CLAIM THE CREDIT?
MY FRIENDS, WHAT THE REAL STORY IS--IF ANY--WE MAY NEVER KNOW! BUT THIS STORY IS UTTERLY FALSE--AS I WILL NOW PROVE!
BAILIFF, BRING IN EXHIBITS A AND B!
IT TAKES BUT A MOMENT TO WHEEL IN THE EXHIBITS--
CATWOMAN, IS THIS NOT THE CAGE IN WHICH YOU CUSTOMARILY KEEP YOUR JAGUAR--THE CAGE YOU TOLD US KEPT YOU AFLOAT AND SAVED YOUR LIFE?
IT IS!
16

THIS CAGE, CATWOMAN, CAME WITH THE JAGUAR WHEN YOU FIRST BROUGHT IT HERE FROM BRAZIL?
YES!
IT'S MADE FROM BRAZILIAN PEPPER TREE-- AN EXTREMELY STRONG WOOD, EXCELLENT FOR THE PURPOSE!
IN FACT, IT HAS A DENSITY ONE-AND-A-HALF TIMES THAT OF WATER-- SO THAT IF YOU WERE TO DROP IT INTO WATER--
SPLOOSH
IT WOULD SINK-- LIKE A ROCK!
INSTANT PANDEMONIUM-- AND A VERDICT!...
NOT GUILTY!
YOU FRAMED ME! IT'S NOT THE SAME CAGE!
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SAY? NO, CATWOMAN, THE TRUTH IS--YOU FRAMED YOURSELF! NICE TRY... SEE YOU AROUND!
YOU BET YOUR LIFE! AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IN THE USUAL MANNER AS TO WHEN WE NEXT CONVENE--AT WHICH TIME WE WILL HEAR THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEXT CLAIMANT!
THIS COURT STANDS ADJOURNED!
BUT ONLY UNTIL THE TESTIMONY OF THE RIDDLER!

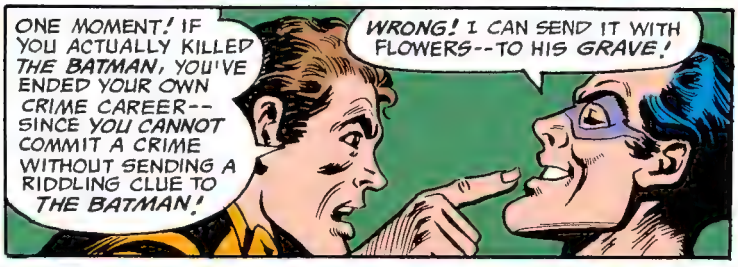

NO. 292 OCT. 35¢
30430
BATMAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
I PLEAD GUILTY TO THE MURDER OF BATMAN!
I GIVE YOU EXHIBIT A-- WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM!
"THE TESTIMONY OF THE RIDDLER!"
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND DYNAMITE

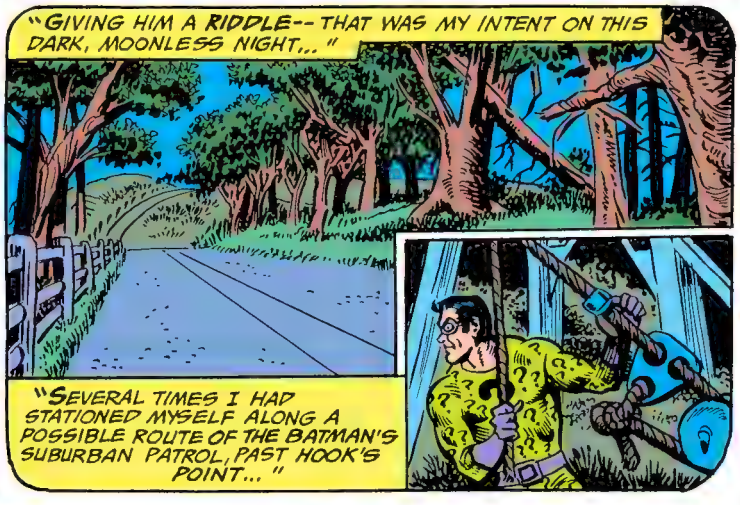

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...
THE BATMAN
I'VE LIVED TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES-- AND DO IT WITH MY OWN HANDS!
THE BATMAN IS DEAD!
BRATATATATAT
WHO KILLED THE BATMAN?
THE GREATEST WHO-DONE-IT OF THE CENTURY!-- ONLY THIS MYSTERY WORKS IN REVERSE! THERE ARE "GUILTY" CANDIDATES GALORE CLAIMING THE HONOR!
AND AMONG THE MOST VENOMOUS AND VIOLENT OF THEM--THE PRINCE OF PUZZLERS-- WHOSE ASTONISHING STORY EXPLODES IN--
"THE TESTIMONY OF THE RIDDLER!"
(THE SECOND INSTALLMENT IN OUR NEW MINI-SERIES...)
"WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?"
STORY: DAVID V. REED
ART: JOHN CALNAN and TEX BLAISDELL
COLORING: JERRY SERPE
LETTERING: MILT SNAPINN

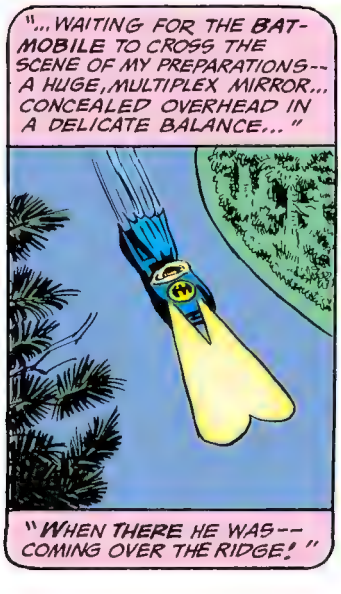
THE HIGH TRIBUNAL OF CRIME IS IN SESSION... CONVENED AFTER DOCUMENTED UNDERWORLD REPORTS OF THE BATMAN'S MURDER! ITS MISSION: TO EXAMINE ALL CLAIMS OF CREDIT FOR THE "HEROIC" DEED--AND ESTABLISH THE IDENTITY OF THE KILLER!
HERE, AT THE ISOLATED, INVIOLATE ESTATE OF COL. JAKE "THE CLAW" VAN CLEEVE, THE PEERS OF THE CRIMINAL WORLD HAVE GATHERED FOR THE SECOND* INQUIRY...
SHOOT, CAVALIER-- HA, HA, HA!
*THE FIRST WAS "THE TESTIMONY OF THE CATWOMAN"!-- JULIE
THE JUDGE, THE INFAMOUS RA'S AL GHŪL; THE JURY-- SIX CELEBRATED CRIMINALS -- THE MAD HATTER, THE SPOOK, POISON IVY, SCARECROW, SIGNALMAN, AND MR. FREEZE...
THIS COURT WILL COME TO ORDER!
I CALL THE NEXT CLAIMANT --
THE PROSECUTOR IS THE ESTEEMED RENEGADE D.A. --HARVEY DENT-- THE DOUBLE-DEALING TWO-FACE... WITH A SOUL EQUALLY SCARRED... DEDICATED... DEADLY.
--EDWARD NIGMA-- THE RIDDLER!
SOME ARE SURPRISED... BUT NOT MANY. THIS MANIACAL OUTLAW IS A THOROUGHLY CREDIBLE CANDIDATE FOR THE MANTLE OF THE BATMAN'S ASSASSIN!
THE TESTIMONY YOU ARE ABOUT TO GIVE --
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT--WHY IS MY CIGAR LIKE THE TESTIMONY I AM ABOUT TO GIVE?
RIDDLER, WE'RE NOT HERE TO WASTE TIME!
A SPLIT-SECOND LATER --
OKAY--BUT I'VE ALREADY GIVEN YOU THE CLUE TO THE RIDDLE'S ANSWER!
BANG!

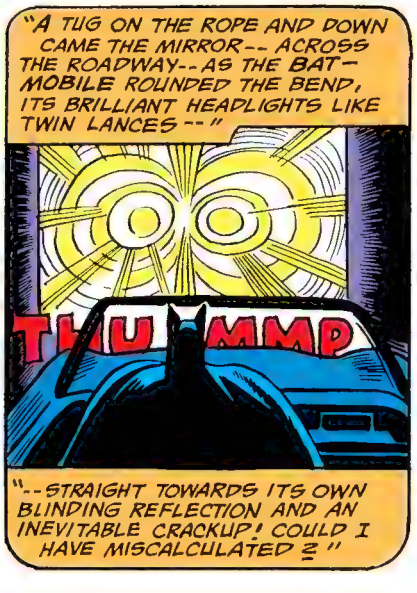
ANOTHER SUCH STUNT, MR. NIGMA, AND YOU'LL BE HELD IN CONTEMPT OF COURT!
A WISE DECISION, YOUR HONOR!
NOW, SIR, IN YOUR OWN WORDS--INCLUDING WHATEVER YOU DEEM RELEVANT--ANSWER THE QUESTION: WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?

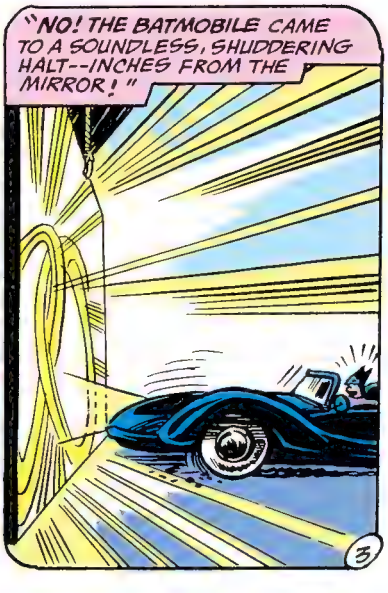
AS EVERYONE HERE KNOWS, I ALWAYS GIVE THE BATMAN A WARNING--IN THE FORM OF A RIDDLE--BEFORE I COMMIT A CRIME!
THIS IS MY COMPULSIVE AND UNIQUE MODUS OPERANDI!


ONE MOMENT! IF YOU ACTUALLY KILLED THE BATMAN, YOU'VE ENDED YOUR OWN CRIME CAREER--SINCE YOU CANNOT COMMIT A CRIME WITHOUT SENDING A RIDDLING CLUE TO THE BATMAN!
WRONG! I CAN SEND IT WITH FLOWERS--TO HIS GRAVE!


"GIVING HIM A RIDDLE--THAT WAS MY INTENT ON THIS DARK, MOONLESS NIGHT..."
"SEVERAL TIMES I HAD STATIONED MYSELF ALONG A POSSIBLE ROUTE OF THE BATMAN'S SUBURBAN PATROL, PAST HOOK'S POINT..."

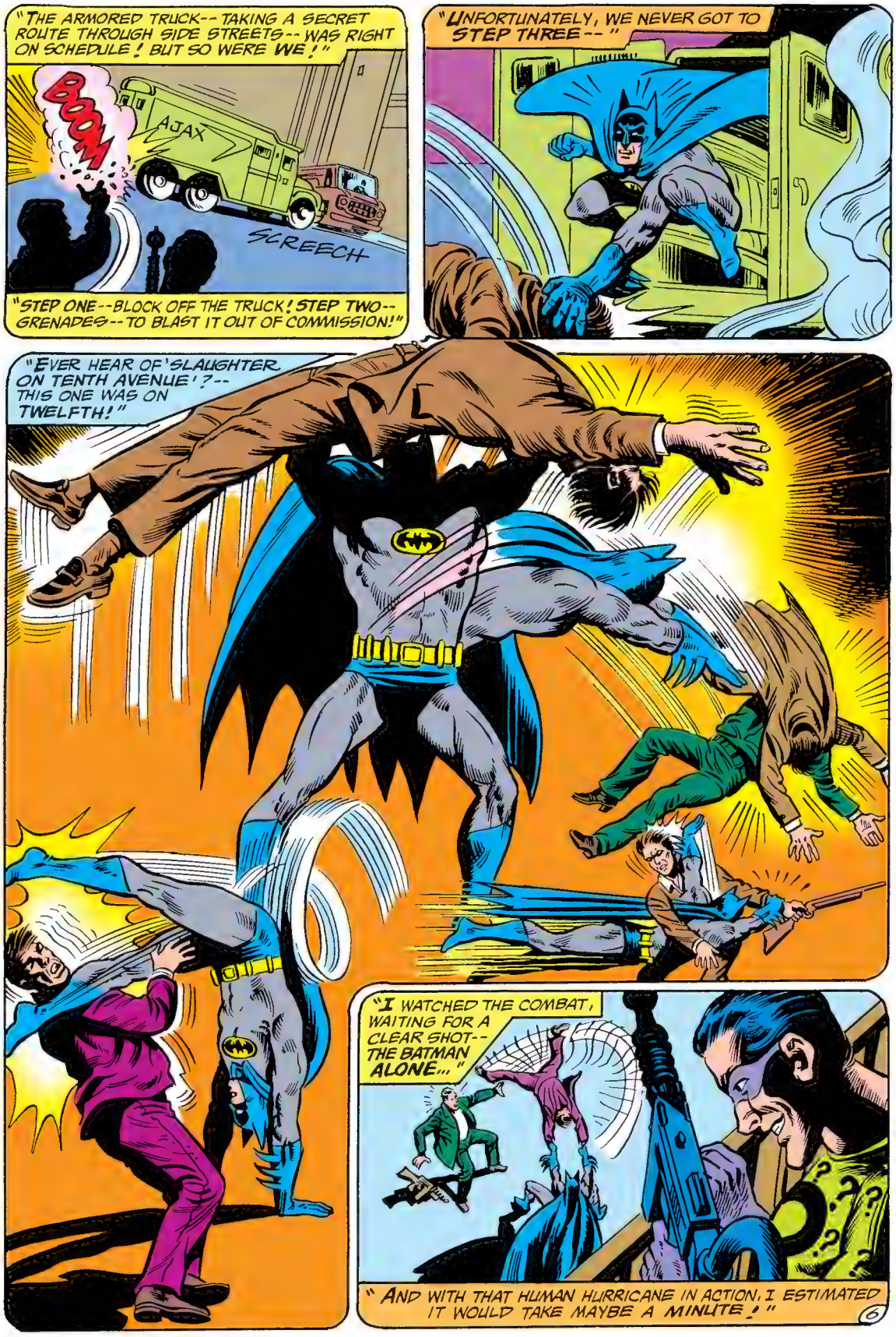

"...WAITING FOR THE BAT-MOBILE TO CROSS THE SCENE OF MY PREPARATIONS--A HUGE, MULTIPLEX MIRROR... CONCEALED OVERHEAD IN A DELICATE BALANCE..."
"WHEN THERE HE WAS--COMING OVER THE RIDGE!"

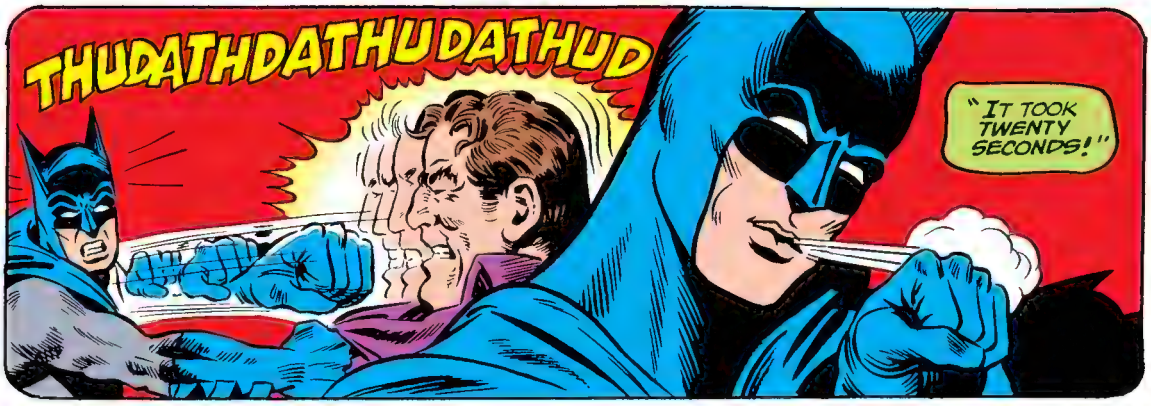

"A TUG ON THE ROPE AND DOWN CAME THE MIRROR--ACROSS THE ROADWAY--AS THE BAT-MOBILE ROUNDED THE BEND, ITS BRILLIANT HEADLIGHTS LIKE TWIN LANCES--"
THUMMP
"--STRAIGHT TOWARDS ITS OWN BLINDING REFLECTION AND AN INEVITABLE CRACKUP! COULD I HAVE MISCALCULATED?"

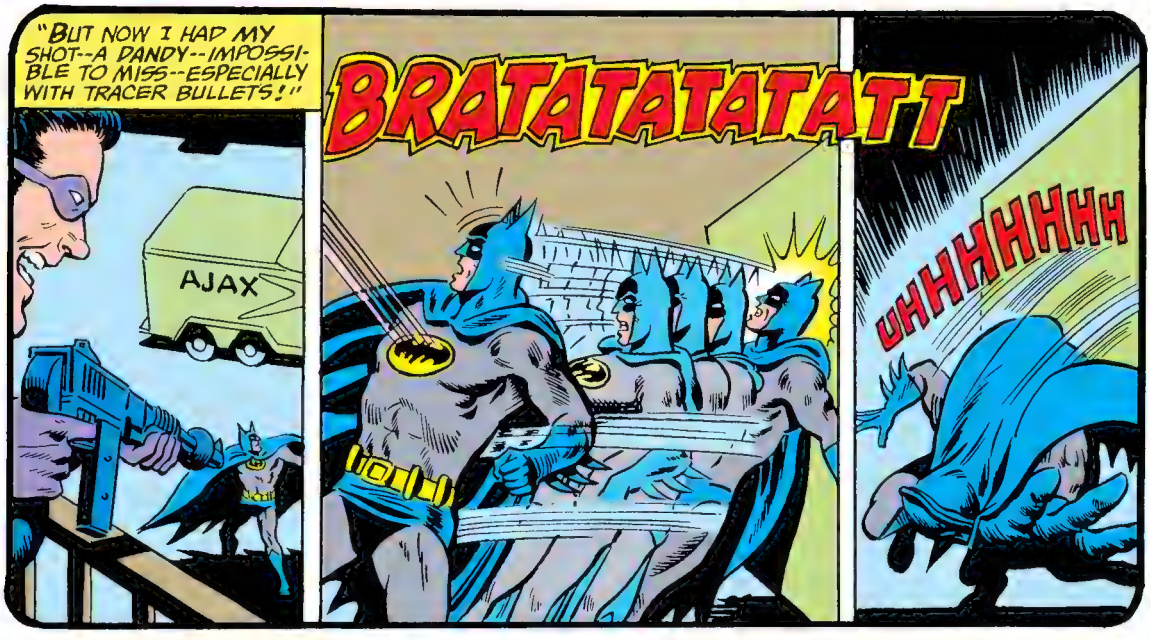

"NO! THE BATMOBILE CAME TO A SOUNDLESS, SHUDDERING HALT--INCHES FROM THE MIRROR!"

"HE WAS OUT OF THE CAR IN AN INSTANT! UTTERLY CONFOUNDED, HE DIMMED HIS LIGHTS..."
"...STARING AT A SIGHT THAT MADE NO SENSE AT ALL!"
"AND THEN, SUDDENLY--HE GOT THE MESSAGE!"
SHALL WE PLAY THE RIDDLER'S GAME-- WITH MEANING CHANGED, BUT WORD THE SAME? THEN FIND THE FOUNDER WHO FOUND FAME, BEFORE HE FOUNDERS IN HIS NAME!
"WHAT COULD BE MORE BEAUTIFUL?--POETRY IN THE NIGHT! BUT THE SUBJECT WAS MURDER!"
"NEXT MOMENT--"
KA-ROOOM
IT EXPLODED SMACK IN HIS FACE! THAT WAS HOW I DELIVERED MY CHALLENGE TO THE BATMAN!
REMEMBER MY RIDDLE ABOUT THIS TESTIMONY AND MY CIGAR... INTERESTING, NO?
BUT MERELY A COINCIDENCE... AND NOT THE ANSWER... AS WE SHALL SEE!

"AS EXPECTED, THE BATMAN SOLVED MY RIDDLE--"
IT'S THE RIDDLER'S WORK-- JUST AS HIS RHYME WARNED!
"FROM MY HIDDEN VANTAGE POINT, I COULD HEAR HIM TALKING TO COMMISSIONER GORDON ABOARD THE BOAT... WHERE IT HAD RUN AGROUND... "
A MAN NAMED JOHN SHOLES... SHOT TO DEATH ON A BOAT THAT FOUNDERED IN THE SHOALS! THE SAME WORD, BUT THE MEANING CHANGED!
A WANTON KILLING-- AS A CLUE!
"BUT-- AS HE NOW REALIZED--IN NO WAY COULD HE HAVE PREVENTED IT... "
"... BECAUSE THIS MURDER--WHICH WAS THE ANSWER TO MY RIDDLE IN THE MIRROR-- WAS ONLY A CLUE TO MY REAL CAPER!"
POLICE
WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THE RIDDLE--"THE FOUNDER WHO FOUND FAME"?
STILL WORKIN' ON IT, COMMISSIONER!
"AND SO, SATISFIED THAT I HAD FULFILLED MY SELF-IMPOSED OBLI-GATION, I MET WITH MY HEAVY-DUTY GOONS FOR THE REAL BUSINESS AT HAND!"
GUNS CHECKED, PLENTY OF AMMO, AND TWO BAGS OF GRENADES!
NICE-- VERY NICE INDEED!
"NEXT EVENING, SHORTLY BEFORE SEVEN O'CLOCK, I WAS IN POSITION TO STRIKE!"
12 AVE
ZZ18
ANY MINUTE NOW! PLACES --EVERYBODY!
"AT STAKE--A MATCHLESS, FANTASTIC LITTLE OBJECT OF ART-- NOTHING LIKE IT ON EARTH-- WORTH THREE MILLION DOLLARS!"


"THE ARMORED TRUCK-- TAKING A SECRET ROUTE THROUGH SIDE STREETS-- WAS RIGHT ON SCHEDULE! BUT SO WERE WE!"
BOOM
AJAX
SCREECH
"STEP ONE--BLOCK OFF THE TRUCK! STEP TWO-- GRENADES--TO BLAST IT OUT OF COMMISSION!"
"UNFORTUNATELY, WE NEVER GOT TO STEP THREE--"
"EVER HEAR OF 'SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE'?-- THIS ONE WAS ON TWELFTH!"
"I WATCHED THE COMBAT, WAITING FOR A CLEAR SHOT-- THE BATMAN ALONE..."
"AND WITH THAT HUMAN HURRICANE IN ACTION, I ESTIMATED IT WOULD TAKE MAYBE A MINUTE!"

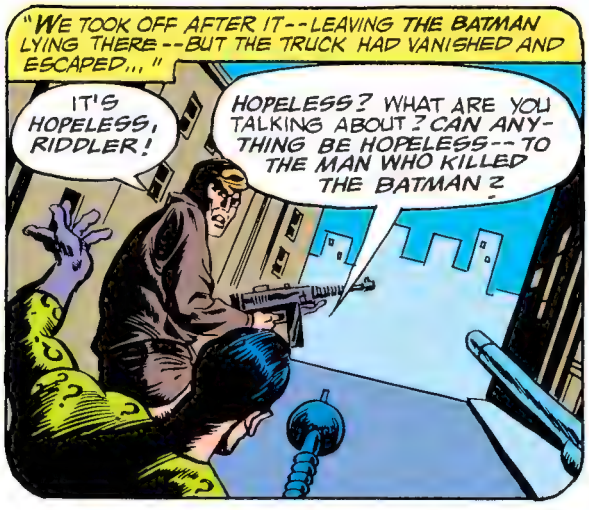

THUDATHDATHUDATHUD
"IT TOOK TWENTY SECONDS!"

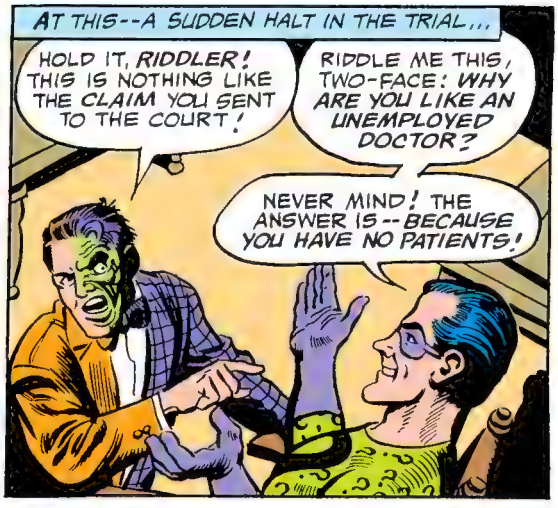

"BUT NOW I HAD MY SHOT--A DANDY--IMPOSSIBLE TO MISS--ESPECIALLY WITH TRACER BULLETS!"
AJAX
BRATATATATATT
UHHHHHHH

"I STOOD THERE... LOOKING DOWN AT HIM... HARDLY ABLE TO COMPREHEND THE MAGNITUDE OF IT..."
"...A SIGHT I KNEW I WOULD NEVER FORGET!"

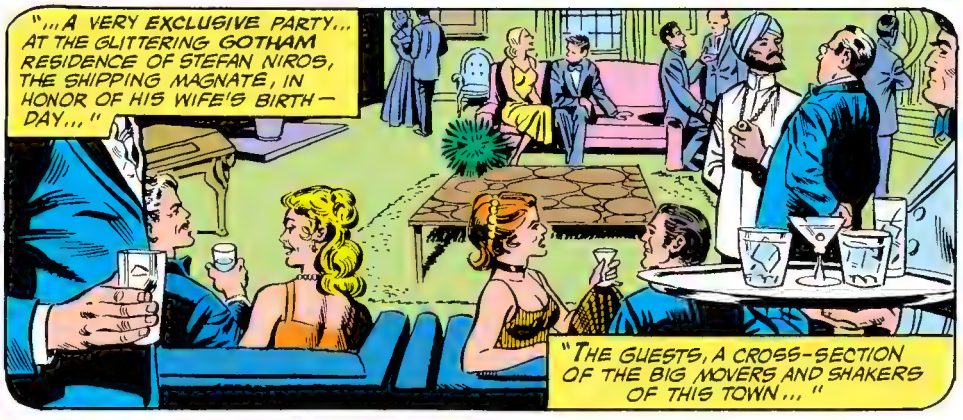
FINALLY... THE END OF THE BATMAN!
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE LAST TIME I RIDDLED HIM... IT WOULD BE WITH BULLETS!

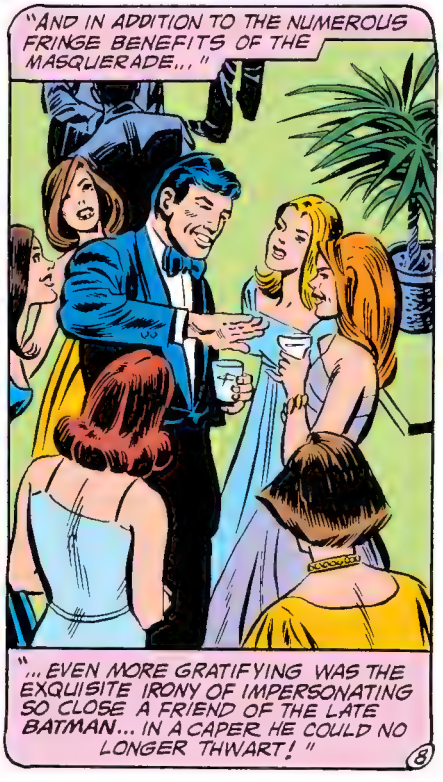
"BUT WE'D COMPLETLY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE DRIVER OF THE ARMORED TRUCK--AND SUDDENLY, IT HAD STARTED UP AGAIN AND WAS SPEEDING AWAY!"
RATATATAT
"WE HADN'T KNOCKED IT OUT, AFTER ALL--PROBABLY SPECIAL ARMORING--SOMETHING THE BATMAN HAD SEEN TO!"





"TO CONTINUE WITH MY TESTIMONY...I HADN'T GIVEN UP ON THE CAPER--NOT AT ALL! AND WITHIN TWO HOURS, I'D MADE THE MOVES I NEEDED TO BE BACK AT WORK--I WENT TO A PARTY..."





"ALL WENT SMOOTHLY... THEN, ALONG ABOUT TEN O'CLOCK, OUR HOST ADDRESSED US..."
FRIENDS, THE MOMENT HAS COME TO UNVEIL MY BIRTHDAY GIFT TO MY LOVELY WIFE, ELENA--
--IN HOPE OF ENCOURAGING HER RECENT DECISION TO BECOME AN AUTHOR--
A TYPEWRITER--MADE OF GOLD, PLATINUM AND IVORY... ITS KEYS STUDDED WITH DIAMONDS AND RUBIES...
...ITS RIBBON MADE OF SILK FROM A MING DYNASTY ROBE... AND ITS CASE ENCRUSTED WITH EMERALDS!
"THIS INCREDIBLE PRIZE, OF COURSE, WAS WHAT HAD BEEN IN THE ARMORED TRUCK--AND WAS THE ULTIMATE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE IN THE MIRROR!"
"YOU SEE, THE TYPEWRITER WAS INVENTED IN 1868 BY A MAN NAMED C.L. SHOLES--ITS FOUNDER--MEANING ONE WHO CASTS METALS, AS HE DID!"
"SO NOW--MY MOMENT HAD COME! MY MEN, APPROPRIATELY DRESSED FOR THEIR ROLES... AND ADMITTED BY ME THROUGH A SERVICE DOOR... HAD UNOBTRUSIVELY JOINED THE OTHER FLUNKIES--"
"--WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL I GAVE THEM!"
STAND BACK!
REACH!
"I LEFT MY OWN PISTOL IN ITS HOLSTER. THEY HAD THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND WITHOUT ME--AND I COULD MAKE A VERY UNEXPECTED BACKUP MAN, IF NEEDED!"
"BUT I BARELY TURNED MY HEAD A MOMENT--WHEN SOMETHING BLUE FLASHED BY ME--"

"THE BATMAN--AS LARGE AS...LIFE!"
THUD
THUK
"I WAS THUNDERSTRUCK... ABSOLUTELY IN SHOCK!"
"NO, I THOUGHT...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE--IT COULDN'T BE!"
"BUT AS I WATCHED WHAT WAS HAPPENING, I KNEW IT COULDN'T BE ANYONE ELSE!"
"ALL I KNEW WAS--I WANTED OUT--FAST!"
WHUMP
"MY TOP HONCHO WAS ALREADY LAMMING OUT WITH THAT TYPEWRITER-- AND I STARTED TO FOLLOW..."
"THAT WAS WHEN THE BATMAN CAME RUSHING UP BEHIND ME--STARTED TO GO PAST ME--AND SUDDENLY CAUGHT A LOOK AT MY FACE--"
"--WITH AN EXPRESSION SO WEIRD, I WAS SURE IT WAS ALL OVER!"
10

"AND IN THAT MOMENTARY HESITATION--"
WOK!
"HE WAS DOWN NOW--AND AGAIN I TRIED TO FOLLOW MY HONCHO--WHEN,,, "
BRUCE--DON'T! NOTHING,,YOU CAN,,, DO,,,!
"'BRUCE' HE HAD CALLED ME! AND I REALIZED I HAD NO NEED TO RUN!"
"EVERYTHING HAD WORKED OUT PERFECTLY! MY MEN HAD ALL ESCAPED--AND WE HAD WHAT WE'D COME FOR!"
SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?
YES,,, THANKS FOR TRYING TO LEND A HAND, OLD FRIEND!
THAT WAS A NASTY SHOT YOU TOOK!
MY FAULT! I WAS SO SURPRISED TO SEE YOU, I GOT CARELESS,,,
"HOW MARVELOUS I FELT STANDING THERE--KNOWING I HAD ACTUALLY BAMBOOZLED THE BATMAN INTO BELIEVING I WAS BRUCE WAYNE!"
"PRESENTLY, THE FUZZ ARRIVED,,, AND I MANAGED TO GET A FEW MOMENTS ALONE--"
"--WHICH I NEEDED--BECAUSE NOW, WITH THE BATMAN ALIVE--MY COMPULSION SEIZED ME AGAIN--AND I COULDN'T RESIST GIVING HIM ANOTHER RIDDLE!"
"AND SO, SHORTLY AFTERWARD--"
LOOK AT THIS, BATMAN! I FOUND IT IN THE HALL!
BATMAN!
Once again, take new aim, Meaning different, word the same: The object of the hunter's game Is what gives the place its NAME!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
IT MEANS THE RIDDLER WAS HERE--IN DISGUISE--RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE--AND THIS IS HIS WAY OF TELLING ME WHERE TO HUNT FOR THE STOLEN TYPEWRITER!
11

AND YOU'VE SOLVED IT?
THE OBJECT OF THE HUNTER'S GAME IS PREY--WHICH, CHANGED TO P-R-A-Y --MUST MEAN A CHURCH...SOMEWHERE ON HUNTER'S ROAD!
"AND WITH THAT, HE TOOK OFF!"
"WELL, I LAUGHED MYSELF SICK! HE WAS SO ADDLED HE NEVER REALIZED HE HADN'T SATISFIED THE REQUIREMENTS OF THAT RIDDLE!"
"HE HAD TURNED MY 'HUNTER'S GAME' INTO A WILD GOOSE CHASE!"
"IMMEDIATELY, I CALLED MY H.Q. AND GAVE MY ORDERS!"
MEET YOU WHERE, RIDDLER?
YOU HEARD ME--IN EXACTLY ONE HOUR!
AND DON'T ARGUE--I HAVE MY REASONS!
"THEY JUST DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE MANDATORY PRINCIPLE OF MY DEADLY GAME WITH THE BATMAN!"
"I HAD HASTILY CONCOCTED THAT RIDDLE TELLING HIM WHERE THE TYPEWRITER WOULD BE--SO IT HAD TO BE THERE!"
"BUT HE HAD MISSED THE POINT OF THE RIDDLE--CLUE!..."
GOTHAM CITY 25 MI.
"BECAUSE IF THE OBJECT OF THE HUNTER'S GAME WAS PREY--OR EVEN P-R-A-Y--THE PLACE WOULD HAVE TO BE CALLED BY THE SAME WORD--TO GIVE IT ITS NAME--"
"AND THAT WORD WAS QUARRY!"
NORTH SHORE QUARRY CORP
"--WHERE MY MEN WERE WAITING--SOME FORTY MILES FROM WHERE THE BATMAN SHOULD NOW BE WILDLY SEARCHING ABOUT!"
"BUT--INCREDIBLY--THERE HE WAS!"
RIDDLER, IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT... BUT ALL GOOD THINGS MUST END!
"HE SEEMED A MAGICAL FIGURE...FOR WHOM EVEN THE CLOUDS HAD PARTED...TO REVEAL HIM BATHED IN MOONLIT RADIANCE! NEVER HAD MY FEAR AND HATRED OF HIM BEEN GREATER!"
12

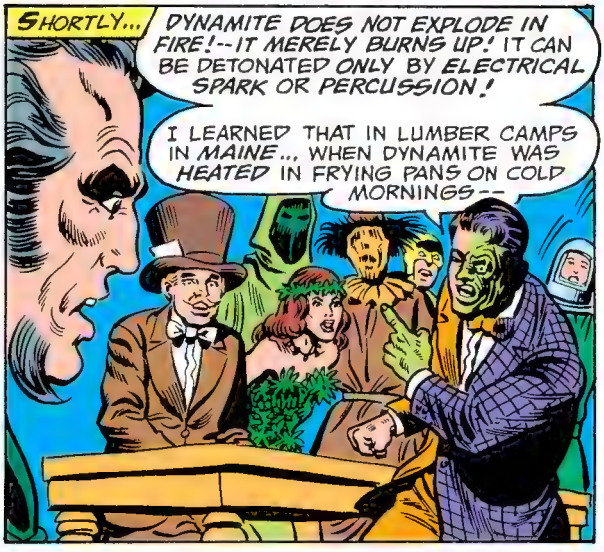
I INTERCEPTED YOUR MURDEROUS CREW AT THE KINGSBORO BRIDGE! THEY'RE SAFELY IN CUSTODY, TOGETHER WITH THE TYPEWRITER!
YOU SENT ME ONE RIDDLE TOO MANY--AND QUARRY WAS HARDLY UP TO YOUR USUAL STANDARD!
YOU'D HAVE BEEN BETTER ADVISED TO REMAIN DISGUISED AS BRUCE WAYNE... EVEN THOUGH--AS YOU HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING--I HAD PHONED WAYNE SHORTLY BEFORE THE PARTY--
--IN FLORIDA!
"BY THEN, I WAS BEYOND SURPRISE ...BEYOND ALL FEELING...EXCEPT FOR THE GREAT BITTERNESS THAT WELLED UP IN ME! ONLY THAT STROKE OF LUCK--THAT COINCIDENTAL PHONE CALL--HAD SAVED HIM!"
I COULD HAVE TAKEN YOU AT THE PARTY...
"HE SPOKE SOFTLY, MOTIONLESS--BUT I KNEW THAT AT MY SLIGHTEST MOVE, HE'D LEAP AT ME--"
--BUT I HAD TO GIVE YOU TIME TO DISPATCH YOUR THUGS HERE--TO MAKE YOUR QUARRY RIDDLE LEGITIMATE!
BUT BEFORE--HOW DID YOU SURVIVE MY TOMMY-GUN BURST?
THAT'S MY SECRET--WHICH I MAY WANT TO USE AGAIN!
"I JUMPED ASIDE AS MY KNIFE CUT THROUGH THE ROPE..."
SNIC
"--AND--"
KA-ROOOM
13

"HE WAS STILL CONSCIOUS, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY HURT! THOSE SLABS OF LIMESTONE WEIGHED HUNDREDS OF POUNDS EACH..."
THIS IS IT, BATMAN-- FINITO!
"QUICKLY, I WENT ABOUT SETTING HIM UP--TO MAKE SURE THAT HIS LAST MINUTES ON EARTH WOULD BE HELL!"
"I BROKE INTO THE QUARRY'S EXPLOSIVES SHACK-- TOOK OUT A CASE OF DYNAMITE..."
"...PLACED IT STRATEGICALLY-- AND UNDER IT--A LANTERN WITH THE TOP REMOVED, ITS WICK RAISED TO MAXIMUM!"
NOW, BATMAN--TELL ME AGAIN HOW YOU BEAT ME!
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX DYNAMITE
"THE FLAMES WERE SPREADING! IT WAS TIME TO HIGHTAIL IT OUT OF THERE--"
YOU WIN... RIDDLER...
...THE FINAL VICTORY, BATMAN!
"THE LAST I SAW OF HIM, HE WAS STRUGGLING DESPERATELY TO GET AT THE FLAME...JUST BEYOND HIS REACH!"
"TWO MINUTES LATER...AS I WATCHED FROM THE TOP OF THE QUARRY--"
BA-ROOOM
14
"THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT! THE BAT-MAN WAS DESTROYED--ATOMIZED!"

THE TESTIMONY HAS ENDED! THE RIDDLER TRIUMPHANTLY SCANS THE BUZZING CHAMBER UNTIL HIS EYES MEET THE MALEVOLENT GAZE OF THE PROSECUTOR...
AND NOW, TWO-FACE, YOU FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHY MY CIGAR WAS LIKE MY TESTIMONY... BECAUSE THEY BOTH WENT BOOM AT THE END!
INDEED? TELL ME, RIDDLER-- WHAT DOES A POOR MAN HAVE THAT A RICH MAN NEEDS?
NOTHING!
RIGHT-- WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT YOUR TESTIMONY ADDS UP TO!
OH, THERE MAY BE SMIDGINS OF TRUTH IN IT--THE NIROS PARTY AND THE DUD TYPE-WRITER CAPER WERE IN THE PAPERS--
--BUT AS FOR KILLING THE BATMAN--
--SUCH CLUMSY FICTION IS A FLAGRANT MOCKERY OF THE COURT! I WON'T EVEN BOTHER TO CROSS-EXAMINE THIS MYTHOMANIAC!
YOUR HONOR, MAY I APPROACH THE BENCH?
A SHORT WHISPERED CONVERSATION... THEN--
AFTER A 15-MINUTE RECESS, THE COURT WILL RECONVENE OUTDOORS, A SHORT DISTANCE FROM HERE!
LUTHOR, WHAT IN BLAZES IS TWO-FACE UP TO?
WE'LL SOON FIND OUT, KILLER MOTH!
FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...
MEMBERS OF THE JURY, I'LL BE BRIEF! WE WENT TO THE NORTH SHORE QUARRY AND APPROPRIATED SEVERAL BOXES OF THEIR DYNAMITE... WHICH NOW RING THAT PLATFORM!
UNDER THAT DYNAMITE IS KINDLING WOOD--SOAKED IN GASOLINE!
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX DYNAMITE
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX DYNAMITE
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX DYNAMITE
NOW--THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DEAL WITH THIS MERCHANT OF BUNK...
BAILIFFS--SEIZE THE RIDDLER--AND TIE HIM TO THE POST ON THE PLATFORM!

STOP--YOU CAN'T DO THIS! TWO-FACE IS TRYING TO FORCE ME TO RETRACT--TO MAKE A FALSE CONFESSION!
SHUT UP, RIDDLER--YOUR CONFESSION IS TOTALLY UNNECESSARY!
THEN--WITH THE RIDDLER SECURELY TRUSSED IN PLACE...
IT WAS ALL TRUE! I SWEAR IT!
NOW--OBSERVE--AS I LIGHT THIS SATURATED FUEL!
WHY IS EVERYONE RUNNING?
BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX DYNAMITE
TEN SECONDS LATER...
LOOK--TWO-FACE--JUMPING THROUGH THE FIRE!
HE'S GOING TO JOIN THE RIDDLER!
THE DYNAMITE IS ON FIRE! IT'S BLAZING!
THE RIDDLER'S PASSED OUT!
--AND TWO-FACE IS DOUBLED UP LAUGHING!
A LONG, HARROWING, SUSPENSEFUL MINUTE PASSES... THEN --
THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR!
UNTIE THE RIDDLER AND BRING HIM OUT!
AND JUST IN CASE ANYONE THINKS THIS DYNAMITE IS PHONEY--OR WE'VE TAMPERED WITH IT--WATCH WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I THROW IT!

BOOOM!
SHALL I THROW ANOTHER--OR ARE YOU CONVINCED?
THE COURT WILL NOW RETURN TO THE CHAMBER!
REVIVE THE RIDDLER AND HAVE HIM ESCORTED HERE!

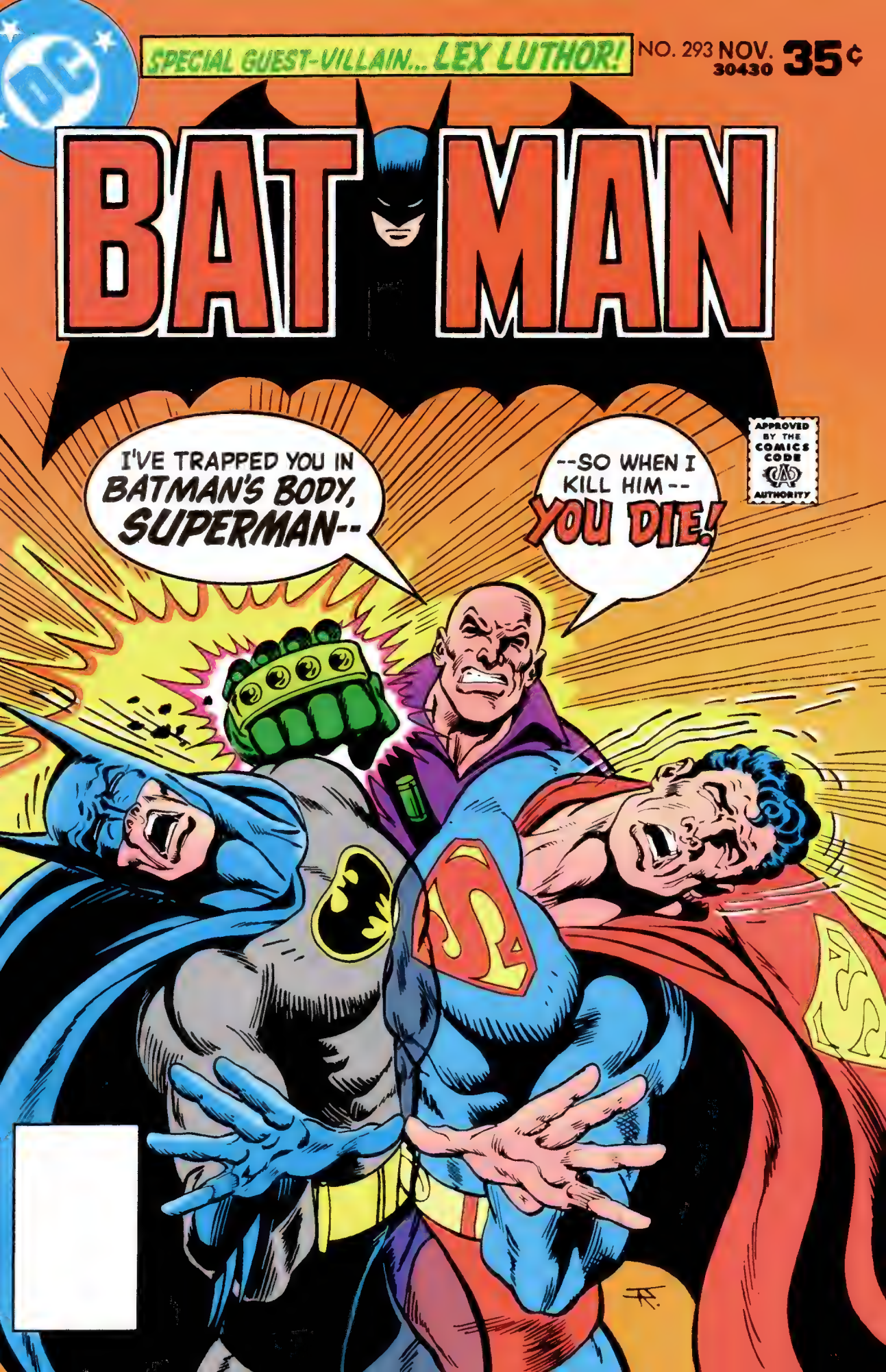

SHORTLY...
DYNAMITE DOES NOT EXPLODE IN FIRE!--IT MERELY BURNS UP! IT CAN BE DETONATED ONLY BY ELECTRICAL SPARK OR PERCUSSION!
I LEARNED THAT IN LUMBER CAMPS IN MAINE... WHEN DYNAMITE WAS HEATED IN FRYING PANS ON COLD MORNINGS--

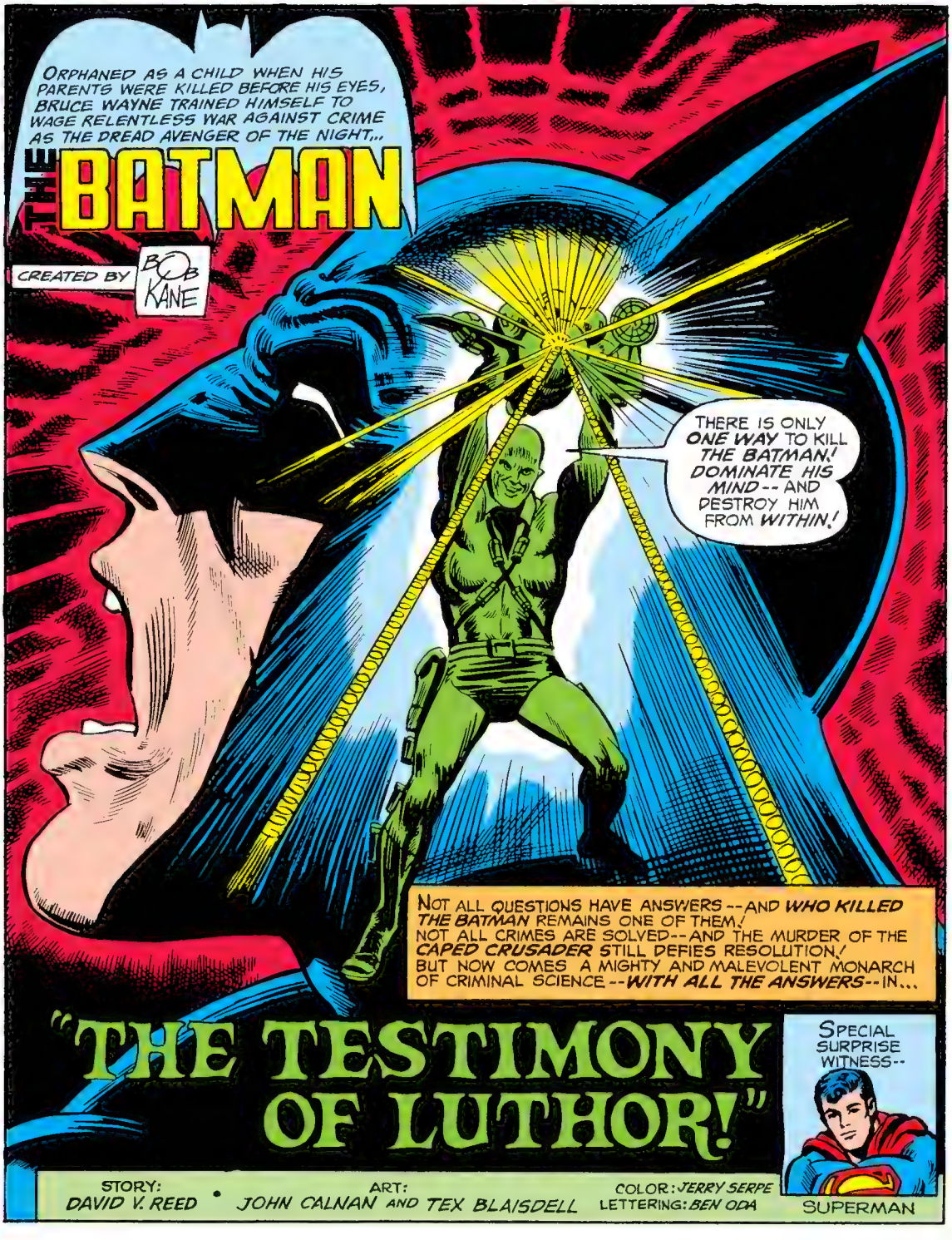
--TO MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE DETONATOR --BUT NOT EXPLODE IT!
NOT GUILTY!
THROW THE BUM OUT!
MEMBERS OF THE JURY--YOUR VERDICT?

RIDDLER, I PRONOUNCE YOU A GRADUATE IDIOT...
...AND I FINE YOU $25,000 FOR DAMAGES IN THE DYNAMITE DEMONSTRATION!

TAKE HIM AWAY!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED THAT SEVERAL CLAIMANTS HAVE THOUGHT THINGS OVER AND WISH TO WITHDRAW THEIR CLAIMS!
TILL OUR NEXT SESSION--COURT ADJOURNED!
NEXT SESSION--THE TESTIMONY OF LUTHOR!


SPECIAL GUEST-VILLAIN... LEX LUTHOR!
NO. 293 NOV.
30430
35¢
BATMAN
I'VE TRAPPED YOU IN BATMAN'S BODY, SUPERMAN--
--SO WHEN I KILL HIM -- YOU DIE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY


ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...
THE BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO KILL THE BATMAN! DOMINATE HIS MIND -- AND DESTROY HIM FROM WITHIN!
NOT ALL QUESTIONS HAVE ANSWERS -- AND WHO KILLED THE BATMAN REMAINS ONE OF THEM! NOT ALL CRIMES ARE SOLVED -- AND THE MURDER OF THE CAPED CRUSADER STILL DEFIES RESOLUTION! BUT NOW COMES A MIGHTY AND MALEVOLENT MONARCH OF CRIMINAL SCIENCE -- WITH ALL THE ANSWERS -- IN...
"THE TESTIMONY OF LUTHOR!"
SPECIAL SURPRISE WITNESS--
SUPERMAN
STORY: DAVID V. REED • ART: JOHN CALNAN AND TEX BLAISDELL
COLOR: JERRY SERPE
LETTERING: BEN ODA

THE *SUPREME COURT OF CRIME* MEETS AGAIN... NO CLOSER TO SOLVING THE SENSATIONAL MYSTERY THAT HAS THE UNDERWORLD IN TURMOIL! CONVOKED TO PROBE AND ADJUDGE THE NUMEROUS CLAIMS FOR THE GUILT AND GLORY OF *THE BATMAN'S* MURDER, IT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN *SESSION THREE*...

GATHERED AT A SECRET COUNTRY ESTATE TO ATTEND THESE EXTRAORDINARY TRIALS, THE RANKING NOBLES OF OUTLAWRY AWAIT THE GAVEL IN A HIGHLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE...

SO FAR, THE INFAMOUS *CATWOMAN* AND *RIDDLER* HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND DEVASTATED BY UNANIMOUS VERDICTS OF *NOT GUILTY*...

...LARGELY DUE TO THE BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE OF THE *PROSECUTOR--HARVEY DENT*, EX-*D.A.*--THE MALEVOLENT *TWO-FACE*--A SCARRED AND TWISTED CRIMINAL MASTER... AS HEARTLESS AS HE IS LAWLESS...

MAGNIFICENT JOB YOU'RE DOING, SIR! I DOFF MY HAT TO YOU!

ENTER THE PRESIDING JUSTICE, *RĀ'S AL GHŪL*, DIABOLICAL HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIME-COMBINE CALLED *DEMON*...

MR. PROSECUTOR, CALL THE NEXT WITNESS!

THE JURORS--*THE MAD HATTER, THE SPOOK, POISON IVY, SCARECROW, SIGNALMAN*, AND *MR. FREEZE*--ALL CELEBRATED AND CERTIFIED FELONS!

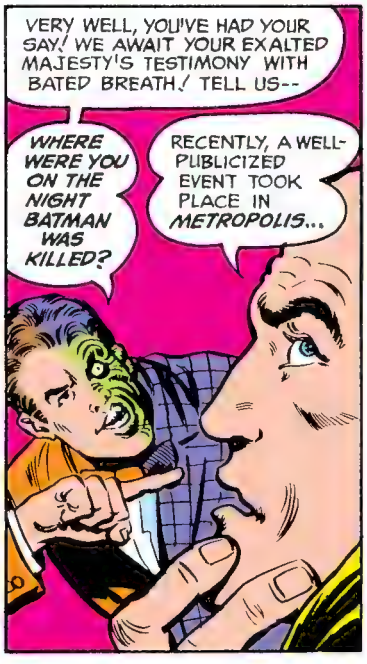
LEX LUTHOR--TAKE THE STAND!

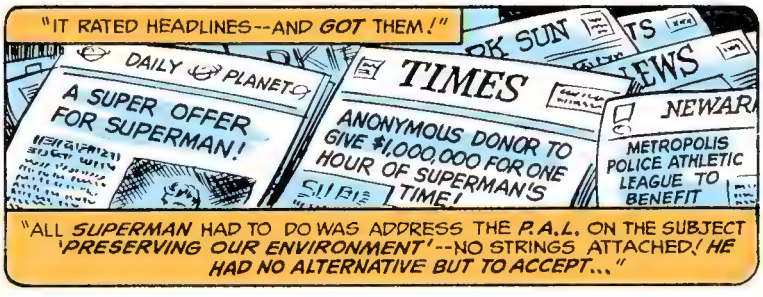
WHAT A GET-UP!

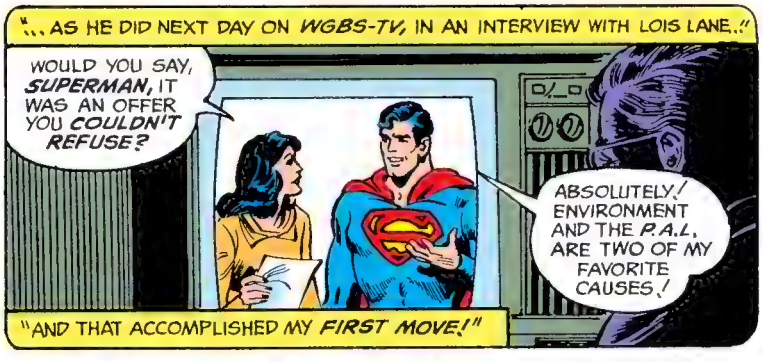
HE ALWAYS HAD DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR!

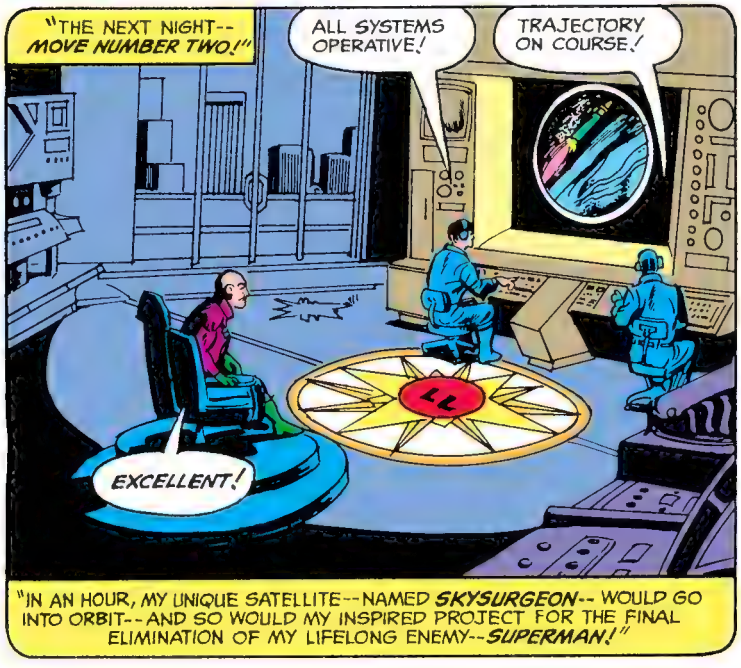
CLAD IN SPLENDOROUS NEW RAIMENT, THE *SINISTER SULTAN OF SCIENCE* MAKES A DRAMATIC ENTRANCE!

I HAVE AN OPENING STATEMENT: HAD THE WORTHY PROSECUTOR TAKEN MY SUGGESTION TO HEAR ME FIRST, THESE TRIALS WOULD BE OVER BY NOW!
INSTEAD, HE HAS CHOSEN TO STAGE A REVOLVING CIRCUS--WASTING EVERYBODY'S TIME--MOST ESPECIALLY MINE!

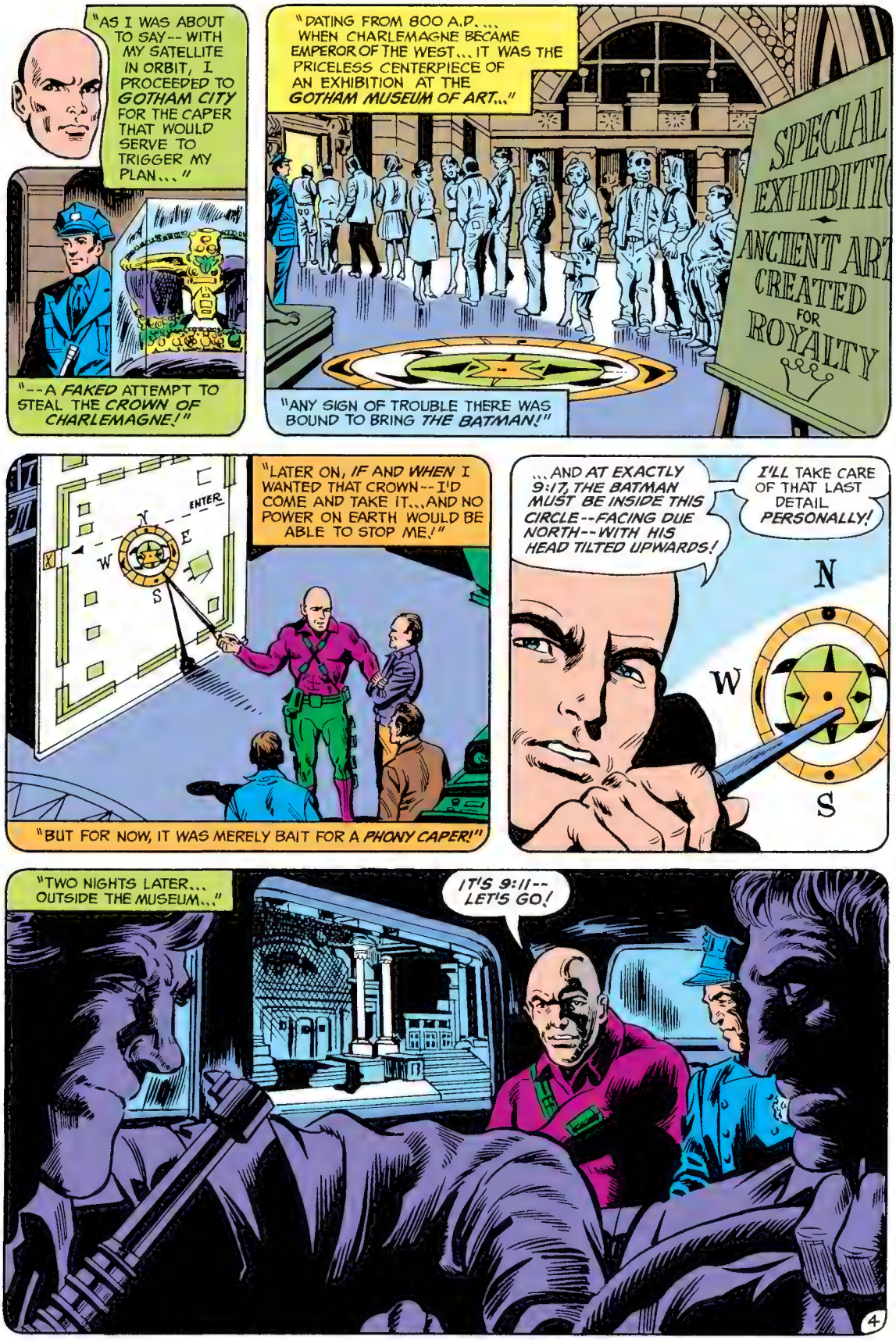

VERY WELL, YOU'VE HAD YOUR SAY! WE AWAIT YOUR EXALTED MAJESTY'S TESTIMONY WITH BATED BREATH! TELL US--
WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?
RECENTLY, A WELL-PUBLICIZED EVENT TOOK PLACE IN METROPOLIS...

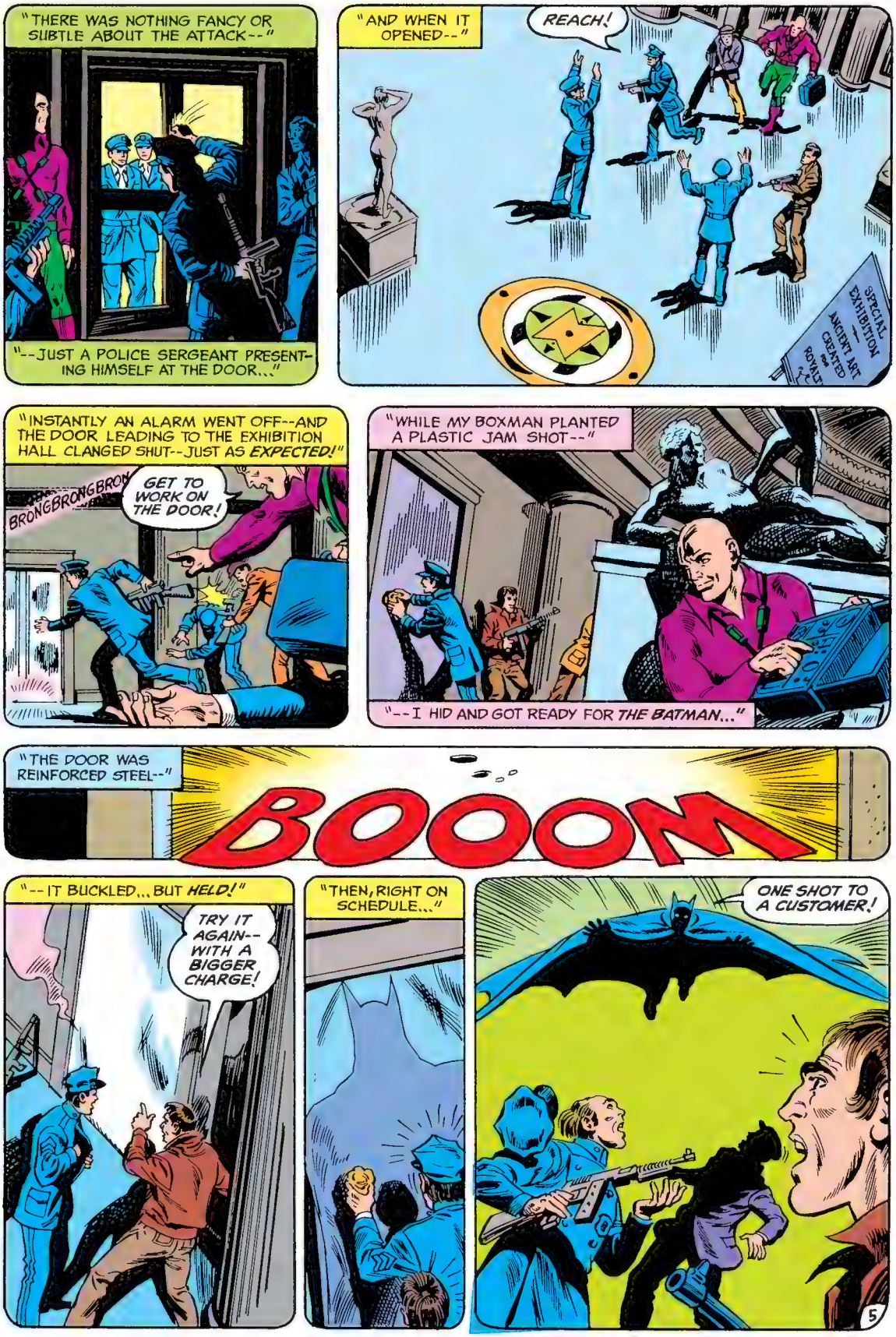

"IT RATED HEADLINES--AND GOT THEM!"
DAILY PLANET
A SUPER OFFER FOR SUPERMAN!
TIMES
ANONYMOUS DONOR TO GIVE $1,000,000 FOR ONE HOUR OF SUPERMAN'S TIME!
NEWARK
METROPOLIS POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE TO BENEFIT
"ALL SUPERMAN HAD TO DO WAS ADDRESS THE P.A.L. ON THE SUBJECT 'PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT'--NO STRINGS ATTACHED! HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACCEPT..."


"...AS HE DID NEXT DAY ON WGBS-TV, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH LOIS LANE.."
WOULD YOU SAY, SUPERMAN, IT WAS AN OFFER YOU COULDN'T REFUSE?
ABSOLUTELY! ENVIRONMENT AND THE P.A.L. ARE TWO OF MY FAVORITE CAUSES!
"AND THAT ACCOMPLISHED MY FIRST MOVE!"


"THE NEXT NIGHT--MOVE NUMBER TWO!"
ALL SYSTEMS OPERATIVE!
TRAJECTORY ON COURSE!
EXCELLENT!
"IN AN HOUR, MY UNIQUE SATELLITE--NAMED SKYSURGEON-- WOULD GO INTO ORBIT--AND SO WOULD MY INSPIRED PROJECT FOR THE FINAL ELIMINATION OF MY LIFELONG ENEMY--SUPERMAN!"

MR. PROSECUTOR, AREN'T YOU LETTING THE WITNESS WANDER RATHER FAR AFIELD? WE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE BATMAN! WHAT IS ALL THIS ABOUT SUPERMAN?
YOUR HONOR, IT'S ALL RELEVANT TO THE CLAIM LUTHOR SENT THE COURT!
CONTINUE, LUTHOR!
3


"AS I WAS ABOUT TO SAY-- WITH MY SATELLITE IN ORBIT, I PROCEEDED TO GOTHAM CITY FOR THE CAPER THAT WOULD SERVE TO TRIGGER MY PLAN..."
"--A FAKED ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE CROWN OF CHARLEMAGNE!"
"DATING FROM 800 A.D.... WHEN CHARLEMAGNE BECAME EMPEROR OF THE WEST... IT WAS THE PRICELESS CENTERPIECE OF AN EXHIBITION AT THE GOTHAM MUSEUM OF ART..."
SPECIAL EXHIBITIO
ANCIENT ART
CREATED FOR ROYALTY
"ANY SIGN OF TROUBLE THERE WAS BOUND TO BRING THE BATMAN!"
ENTER
N
W
E
S
"LATER ON, IF AND WHEN I WANTED THAT CROWN-- I'D COME AND TAKE IT...AND NO POWER ON EARTH WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP ME!"
"BUT FOR NOW, IT WAS MERELY BAIT FOR A PHONY CAPER!"
...AND AT EXACTLY 9:17, THE BATMAN MUST BE INSIDE THIS CIRCLE--FACING DUE NORTH--WITH HIS HEAD TILTED UPWARDS!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT LAST DETAIL PERSONALLY!
N
W
S
"TWO NIGHTS LATER... OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM..."
IT'S 9:11-- LET'S GO!


"THERE WAS NOTHING FANCY OR SUBTLE ABOUT THE ATTACK--"
"--JUST A POLICE SERGEANT PRESENTING HIMSELF AT THE DOOR..."
"AND WHEN IT OPENED--"
REACH!
SPECIAL EXHIBITION — ANCIENT ART CREATED FOR ROYALTY
"INSTANTLY AN ALARM WENT OFF--AND THE DOOR LEADING TO THE EXHIBITION HALL CLANGED SHUT--JUST AS EXPECTED!"
BRONGBRONGBRONG
GET TO WORK ON THE DOOR!
"WHILE MY BOXMAN PLANTED A PLASTIC JAM SHOT--"
"--I HID AND GOT READY FOR THE BATMAN..."
"THE DOOR WAS REINFORCED STEEL--"
BOOOM
"--IT BUCKLED... BUT HELD!"
TRY IT AGAIN-- WITH A BIGGER CHARGE!
"THEN, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE..."
ONE SHOT TO A CUSTOMER!
5

"THERE WAS A MINUTE AND TEN SECONDS TO GO..."
"WOULD MY MEN LAST THAT LONG?"
"IT WAS ROUGH ON THEM--"
SWISH
"FIGHTING THE BATMAN WAS BAD ENOUGH--"
"BUT THEY HAD TO DO IT WHILE WATCHING THE CLOCK--"
"AND WITHOUT TRYING FOR SERIOUS INJURY!"
"I WANTED THAT BODY INTACT!"
SPECIAL EXHIBITION
ROYALTY
"WITH FIVE SECONDS LEFT-- THE BATMAN WAS CORRECTLY POSITIONED--IN THE CIRCLE OF DOOM!"
SPECIAL EXHIBIT

"SUDDENLY--SIMULTANEOUSLY--MY MEN HAD SPUN AROUND HIM--BRINGING HIM TO FACE *NORTH!*..."

"MY MINI-FLARE-MORTAR MADE NO SOUND AS I FIRED--"

"AND--PRECISELY AT *9:17*..."

"*I HAD HIM!*"

"THE REACTION WAS *INSTANTANEOUS!* HE STOPPED DEAD IN HIS TRACKS... UTTERLY BEWILDERED--"

"--HIS EXPRESSION MOUNTING FROM *FRIGHT* TO *PANIC!*"

"NEXT MOMENT--"

HE'S LAMMING OUT!

LET HIM RUN! HE'LL HAVE TO STOP SOMEWHERE--TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND!

LEX LUTHOR PAUSES... LOOKS AROUND THE CROWDED CHAMBER--

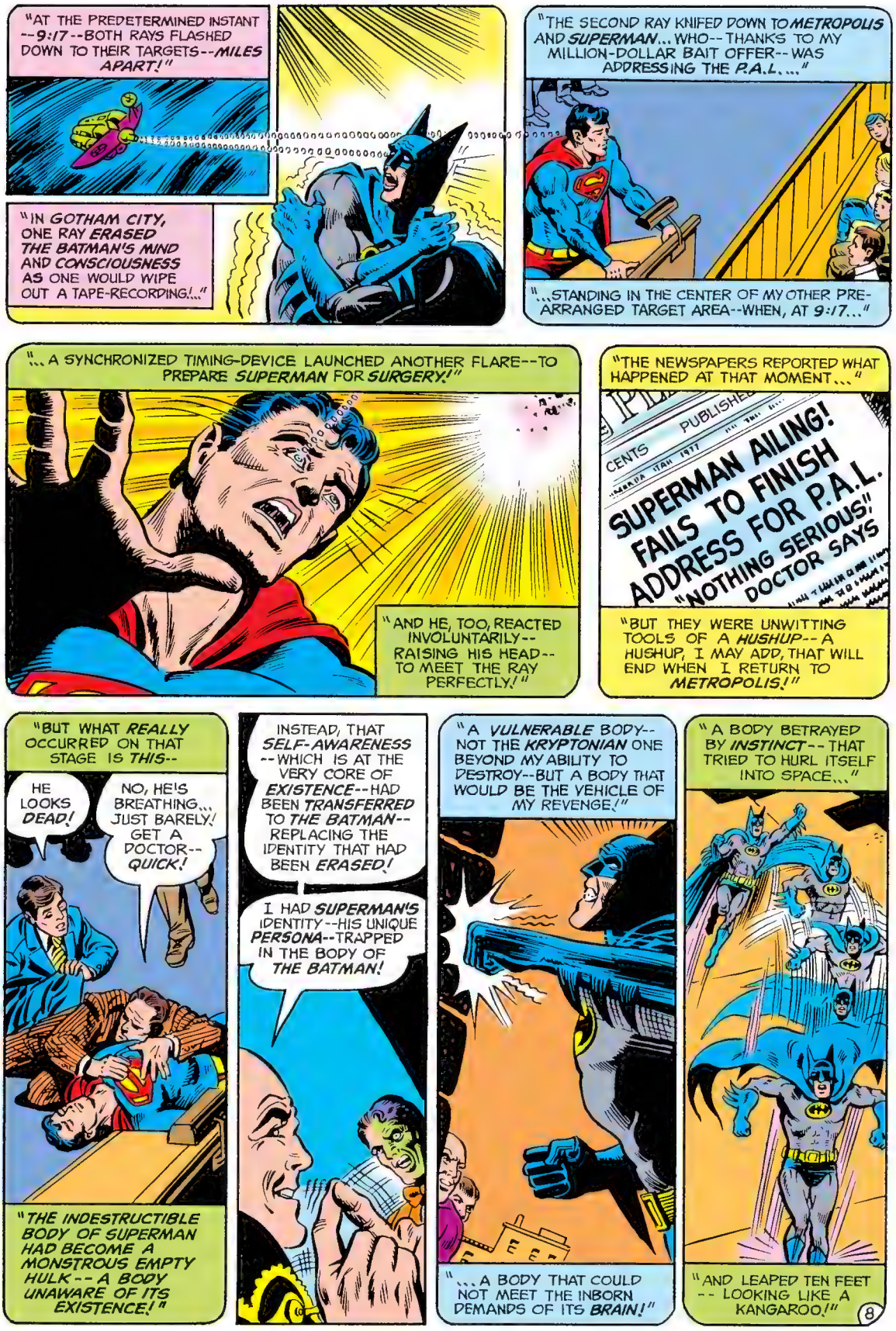
I SEE SKEPTICISM ON YOUR FACES! YOU CAN'T BELIEVE *THE BATMAN* RAN AWAY--?

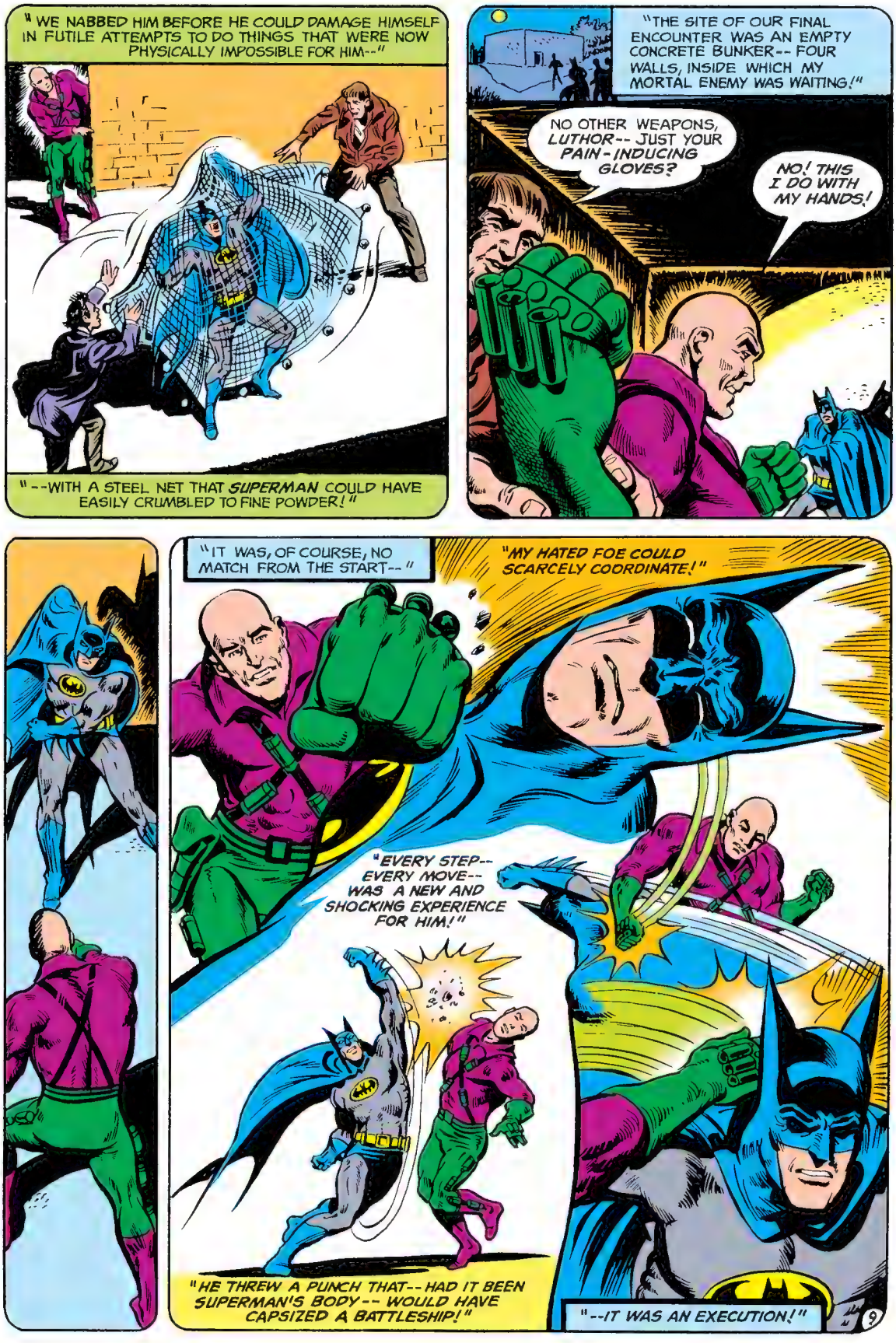
BUT HE DID!--BECAUSE HE WAS NO LONGER THE BATMAN!

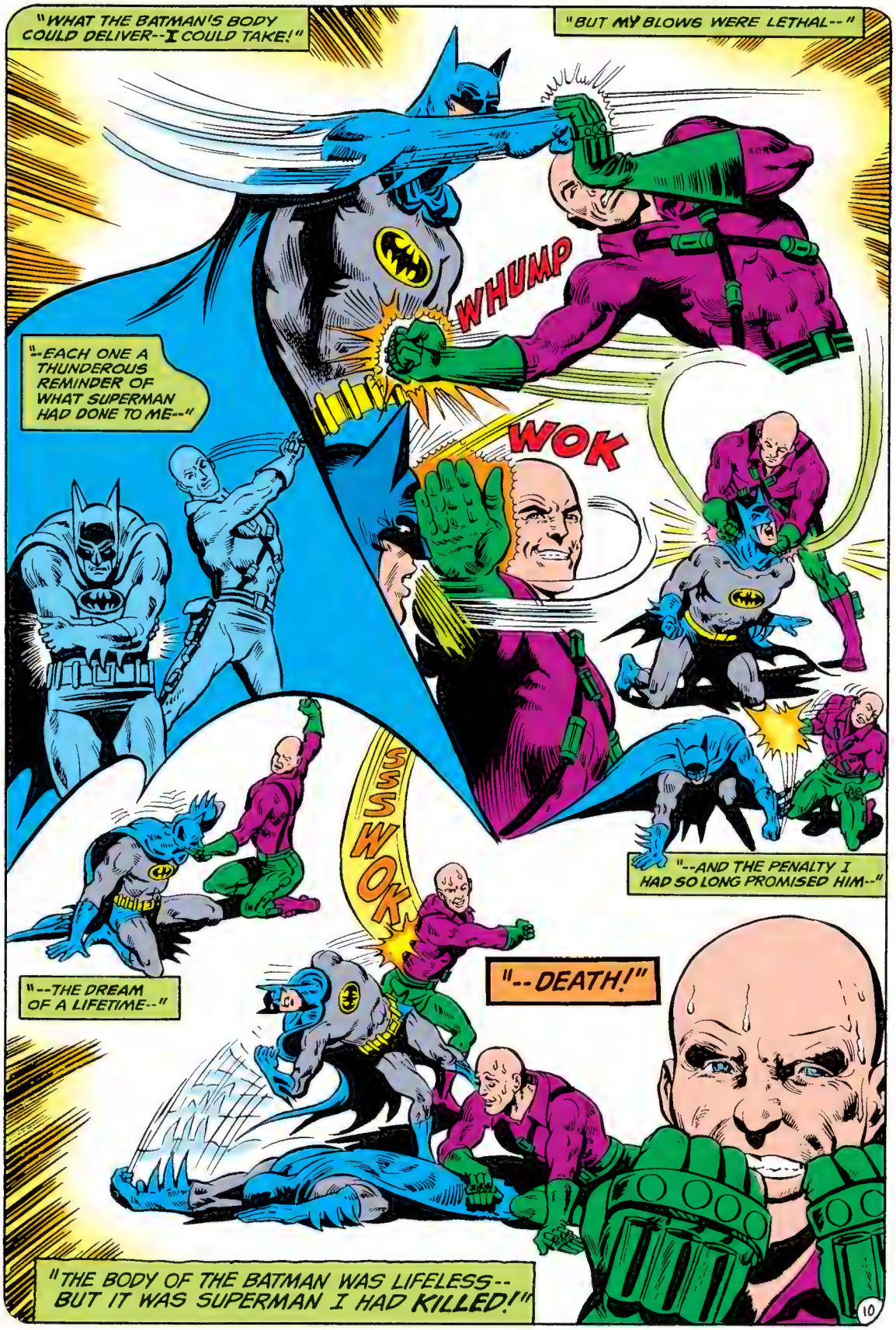
"WITHOUT GOING INTO TECHNOLOGY FAR BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION--INSIDE MY ORBITING SATELLITE *SKY-SURGEON* THERE ARE TWIN ACTINOID *MASER** RAYS..."

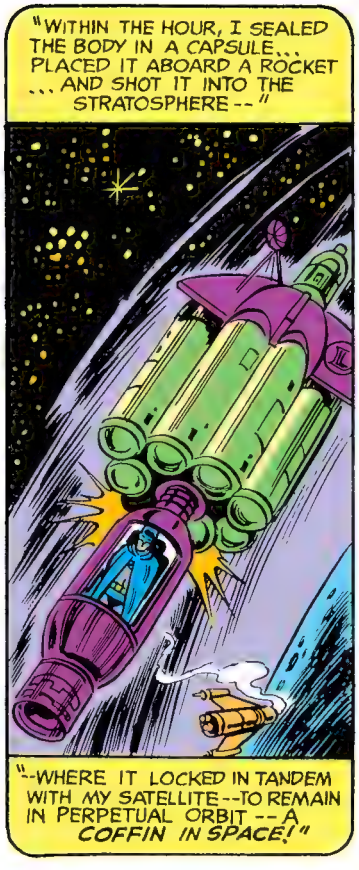
"...DESIGNED TO PERFORM AN ASTONISHING SURGICAL TRANSFERENCE--RAYS DIRECTED TO THE BRAIN THROUGH THE *PUPILS* OF THE *EYES!*"

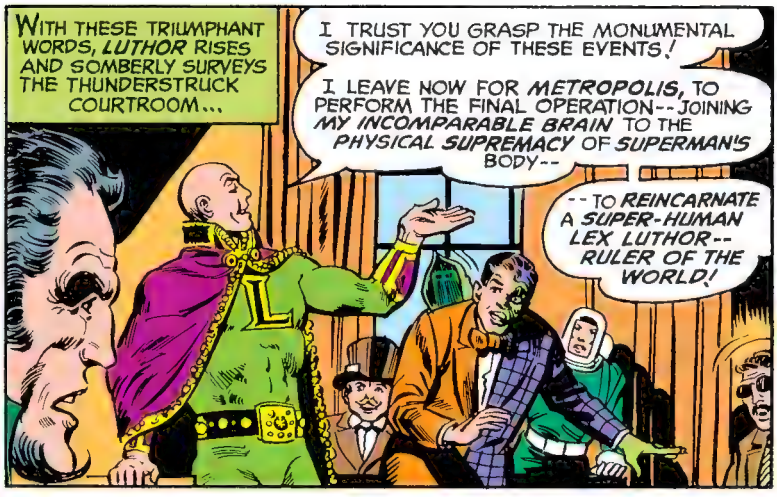
**M*(ICROWAVE) *A*(MPLIFICATION BY) *S*(TIMULATED) *E*(MISSION OF) *R*(ADIATION)!--D.V.R.

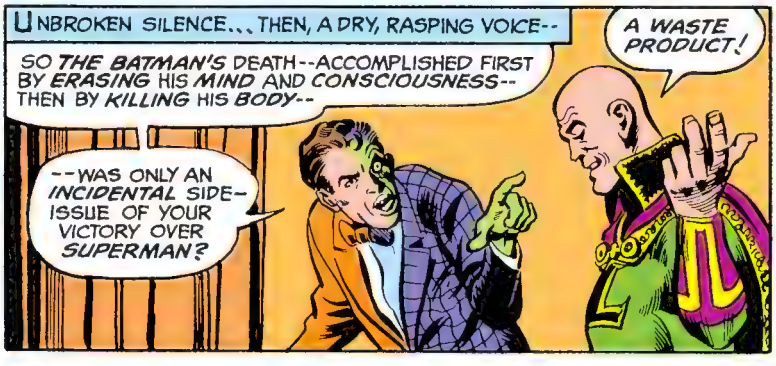

"AT THE PREDETERMINED INSTANT --9:17--BOTH RAYS FLASHED DOWN TO THEIR TARGETS--MILES APART!"
"IN GOTHAM CITY, ONE RAY ERASED THE BATMAN'S MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS AS ONE WOULD WIPE OUT A TAPE-RECORDING!..."
"THE SECOND RAY KNIFED DOWN TO METROPOLIS AND SUPERMAN... WHO--THANKS TO MY MILLION-DOLLAR BAIT OFFER--WAS ADDRESSING THE P.A.L...."
"...STANDING IN THE CENTER OF MY OTHER PRE-ARRANGED TARGET AREA--WHEN, AT 9:17..."
"...A SYNCHRONIZED TIMING-DEVICE LAUNCHED ANOTHER FLARE--TO PREPARE SUPERMAN FOR SURGERY!"
"AND HE, TOO, REACTED INVOLUNTARILY--RAISING HIS HEAD--TO MEET THE RAY PERFECTLY!"
"THE NEWSPAPERS REPORTED WHAT HAPPENED AT THAT MOMENT..."
CENTS
PUBLISHED
SUPERMAN AILING! FAILS TO FINISH ADDRESS FOR P.A.L. "NOTHING SERIOUS," DOCTOR SAYS
"BUT THEY WERE UNWITTING TOOLS OF A HUSHUP--A HUSHUP, I MAY ADD, THAT WILL END WHEN I RETURN TO METROPOLIS!"
"BUT WHAT REALLY OCCURRED ON THAT STAGE IS THIS--
HE LOOKS DEAD!
NO, HE'S BREATHING... JUST BARELY! GET A DOCTOR--QUICK!
"THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BODY OF SUPERMAN HAD BECOME A MONSTROUS EMPTY HULK--A BODY UNAWARE OF ITS EXISTENCE!"
INSTEAD, THAT SELF-AWARENESS --WHICH IS AT THE VERY CORE OF EXISTENCE--HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE BATMAN--REPLACING THE IDENTITY THAT HAD BEEN ERASED!
I HAD SUPERMAN'S IDENTITY--HIS UNIQUE PERSONA--TRAPPED IN THE BODY OF THE BATMAN!
"A VULNERABLE BODY--NOT THE KRYPTONIAN ONE BEYOND MY ABILITY TO DESTROY--BUT A BODY THAT WOULD BE THE VEHICLE OF MY REVENGE!"
"...A BODY THAT COULD NOT MEET THE INBORN DEMANDS OF ITS BRAIN!"
"A BODY BETRAYED BY INSTINCT--THAT TRIED TO HURL ITSELF INTO SPACE..."
"AND LEAPED TEN FEET --LOOKING LIKE A KANGAROO!"


"WE NABBED HIM BEFORE HE COULD DAMAGE HIMSELF IN FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO DO THINGS THAT WERE NOW PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM--"
"--WITH A STEEL NET THAT SUPERMAN COULD HAVE EASILY CRUMBLED TO FINE POWDER!"
"THE SITE OF OUR FINAL ENCOUNTER WAS AN EMPTY CONCRETE BUNKER-- FOUR WALLS, INSIDE WHICH MY MORTAL ENEMY WAS WAITING!"
NO OTHER WEAPONS, LUTHOR-- JUST YOUR PAIN-INDUCING GLOVES?
NO! THIS I DO WITH MY HANDS!
"IT WAS, OF COURSE, NO MATCH FROM THE START--"
"MY HATED FOE COULD SCARCELY COORDINATE!"
"EVERY STEP-- EVERY MOVE-- WAS A NEW AND SHOCKING EXPERIENCE FOR HIM!"
"HE THREW A PUNCH THAT-- HAD IT BEEN SUPERMAN'S BODY-- WOULD HAVE CAPSIZED A BATTLESHIP!"
"--IT WAS AN EXECUTION!"


"WHAT THE BATMAN'S BODY COULD DELIVER--I COULD TAKE!"
"BUT MY BLOWS WERE LETHAL--"
WHUMP
"--EACH ONE A THUNDEROUS REMINDER OF WHAT SUPERMAN HAD DONE TO ME--"
WOK
SSSWOK
"--AND THE PENALTY I HAD SO LONG PROMISED HIM--"
"--THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME--"
"--DEATH!"
"THE BODY OF THE BATMAN WAS LIFELESS-- BUT IT WAS SUPERMAN I HAD KILLED!"


"WITHIN THE HOUR, I SEALED THE BODY IN A CAPSULE... PLACED IT ABOARD A ROCKET ...AND SHOT IT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE--"
"--WHERE IT LOCKED IN TANDEM WITH MY SATELLITE--TO REMAIN IN PERPETUAL ORBIT--A COFFIN IN SPACE!"


WITH THESE TRIUMPHANT WORDS, LUTHOR RISES AND SOMBERLY SURVEYS THE THUNDERSTRUCK COURTROOM...
I TRUST YOU GRASP THE MONUMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE EVENTS!
I LEAVE NOW FOR METROPOLIS, TO PERFORM THE FINAL OPERATION--JOINING MY INCOMPARABLE BRAIN TO THE PHYSICAL SUPREMACY OF SUPERMAN'S BODY--
--TO REINCARNATE A SUPER-HUMAN LEX LUTHOR--RULER OF THE WORLD!

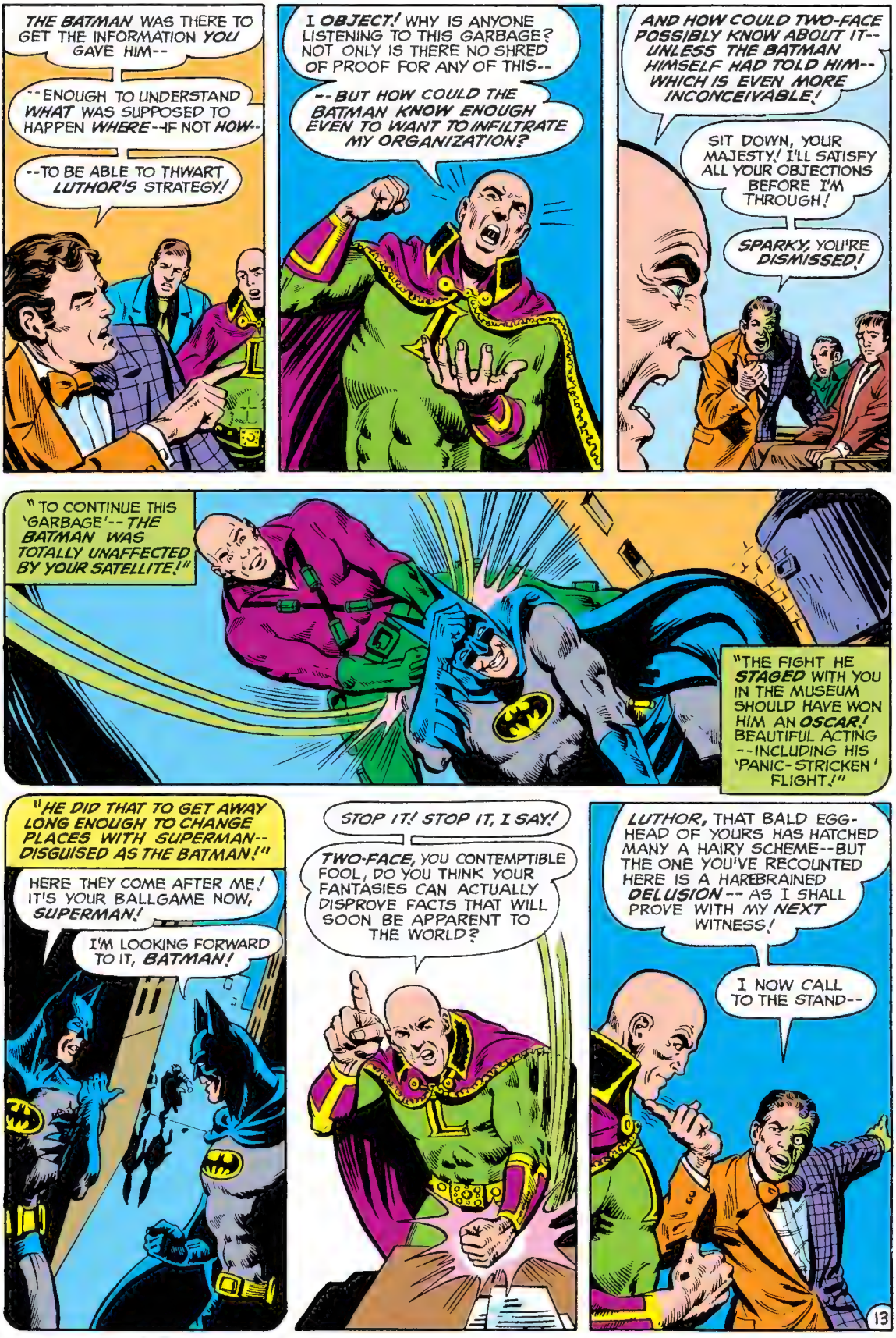

UNBROKEN SILENCE... THEN, A DRY, RASPING VOICE--
SO THE BATMAN'S DEATH--ACCOMPLISHED FIRST BY ERASING HIS MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS--THEN BY KILLING HIS BODY--
A WASTE PRODUCT!
--WAS ONLY AN INCIDENTAL SIDE-ISSUE OF YOUR VICTORY OVER SUPERMAN?

I CAME HERE NOT TO CLAIM CREDIT FOR THE DEED--BUT TO USE THIS DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLAGE AS A FORUM FOR MY ANNOUNCEMENT! THAT DONE, I BID YOU--
HOLD IT! THIS TRIAL IS NOT OVER--NOT QUITE!
WHY NOT? I'VE TOLD YOU THE WHOLE STORY! ARE YOU CALLING ME A LIAR?

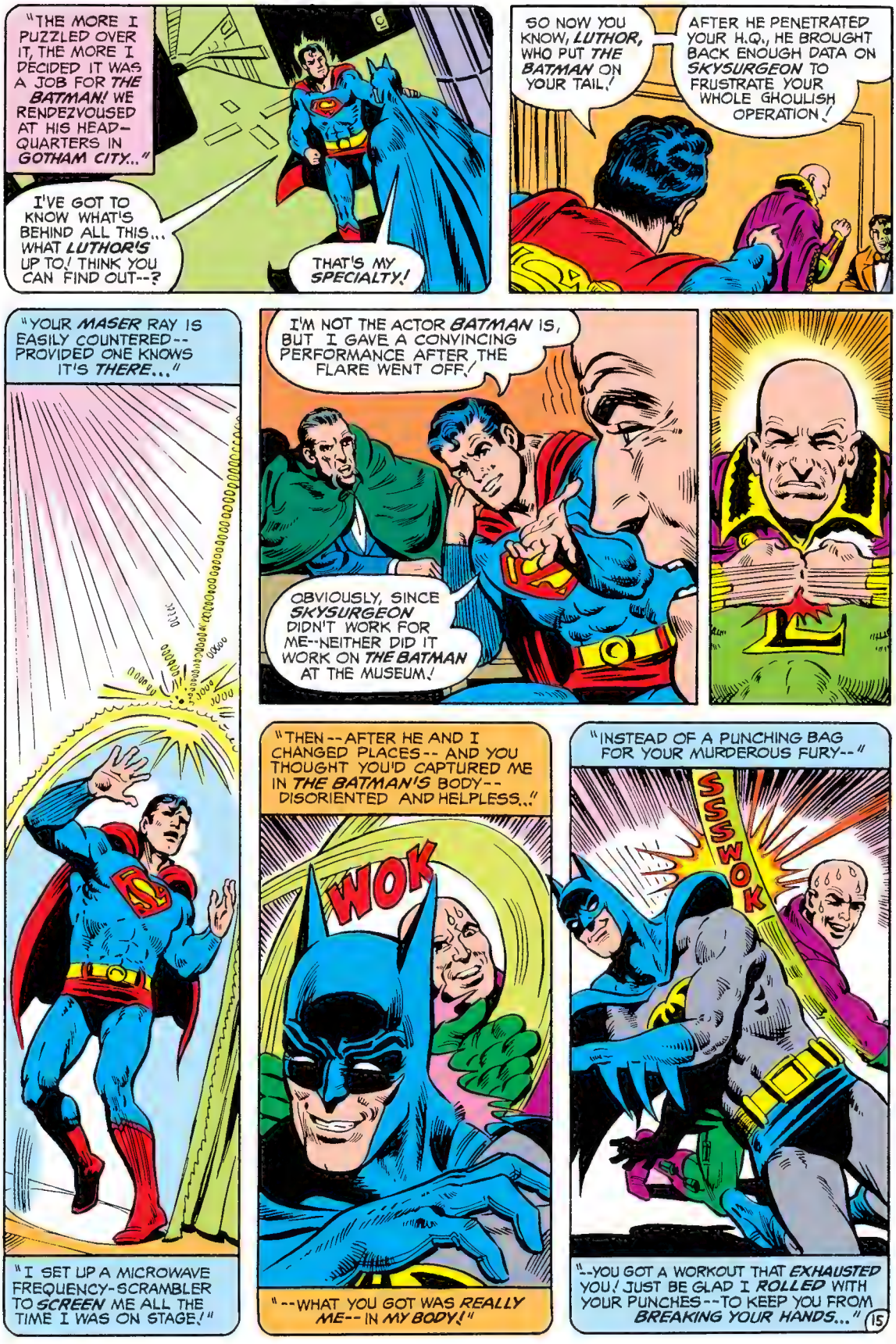
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LYING AND NOT KNOWING THE TRUTH... SO IF YOU'LL STEP DOWN, I'LL CALL ANOTHER WITNESS--
SPARKY GRIMES--TAKE THE STAND!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
DON'T ASK ME, LUTHOR! ALL I KNOW IS I GOT A SUMMONS TO APPEAR IN THIS COURT!
NO WAY I WOULDN'T SHOW!

SPARKY, AS LUTHOR'S CHIEF AIDE, YOU WERE AT HIS CONTROL CENTER A WEEK AGO TONIGHT...WHEN SOMETHING VERY UNUSUAL HAPPENED, RIGHT?
R-R-RIGHT...
TELL US ABOUT IT!
"WELL, IT WAS SAM HOXIE...ONE OF OUR CONSOLE ENGINEERS... ACTING REAL PECULIAR--"
SPARKY, I'M LOSING MY MEMORY ...OR SOMETHING! I CAN'T REMEMBER CERTAIN THINGS... ABOUT...ABOUT...THIS COMING CAPER!
--LIKE WHAT? NOBODY BUT LUTHOR KNOWS ALL THE TECHNICAL DETAILS!
"BUT THAT WASN'T WHAT SAM MEANT! HE WAS ASKING ABOUT THINGS HE WAS SUPPOSED TO KNOW--LIKE WHAT THE SATELLITE WAS FOR...WHERE THE MASER RAYS WOULD GO... AND WHAT THE CAPER WAS BASICALLY ABOUT..."
"IT WENT ON LIKE THAT UNTIL I WAS JUST REPEATING MYSELF, AND I TOLD HIM TO GO LIE DOWN AND REST. FIVE MINUTES LATER, I WENT TO HAVE A LOOK AT HIM--"
"--AND I FOUND HIM IN A CLOSET--UNCONSCIOUS!"
"I BROUGHT HIM TO--AND THIS WAS THE WEIRDEST PART..."
SOMEBODY SLUGGED ME... PUT ME IN THERE... I'VE BEEN OUT MORE THAN AN HOUR!
BUT I WAS TALKING TO YOU TEN MINUTES AGO!
NO...NO... NOT ME!
SPARKY, I'M GOING TO CLEAR UP THAT MYSTERY FOR YOU! SAM HOXIE HAD BEEN SLUGGED--AND HE WASN'T IN THE CONTROL CENTER WITH YOU!
THE "SAM" YOU SPOKE TO WAS...THE BATMAN --IN DISGUISE!
12


THE BATMAN WAS THERE TO GET THE INFORMATION YOU GAVE HIM--
--ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN WHERE--IF NOT HOW--
--TO BE able TO THWART LUTHOR'S STRATEGY!
I OBJECT! WHY IS ANYONE LISTENING TO THIS GARBAGE? NOT ONLY IS THERE NO SHRED OF PROOF FOR ANY OF THIS--
--BUT HOW COULD THE BATMAN KNOW ENOUGH EVEN TO WANT TO INFILTRATE MY ORGANIZATION?
AND HOW COULD TWO-FACE POSSIBLY KNOW ABOUT IT-- UNLESS THE BATMAN HIMSELF HAD TOLD HIM-- WHICH IS EVEN MORE INCONCEIVABLE!
SIT DOWN, YOUR MAJESTY! I'LL SATISFY ALL YOUR OBJECTIONS BEFORE I'M THROUGH!
SPARKY, YOU'RE DISMISSED!
"TO CONTINUE THIS 'GARBAGE'-- THE BATMAN WAS TOTALLY UNAFFECTED BY YOUR SATELLITE!"
"THE FIGHT HE STAGED WITH YOU IN THE MUSEUM SHOULD HAVE WON HIM AN OSCAR! BEAUTIFUL ACTING --INCLUDING HIS 'PANIC-STRICKEN' FLIGHT!"
"HE DID THAT TO GET AWAY LONG ENOUGH TO CHANGE PLACES WITH SUPERMAN-- DISGUISED AS THE BATMAN!"
HERE THEY COME AFTER ME! IT'S YOUR BALLGAME NOW, SUPERMAN!
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT, BATMAN!
STOP IT! STOP IT, I SAY!
TWO-FACE, YOU CONTEMPTIBLE FOOL, DO YOU THINK YOUR FANTASIES CAN ACTUALLY DISPROVE FACTS THAT WILL SOON BE APPARENT TO THE WORLD?
LUTHOR, THAT BALD EGG-HEAD OF YOURS HAS HATCHED MANY A HAIRY SCHEME--BUT THE ONE YOU'VE RECOUNTED HERE IS A HAREBRAINED DELUSION-- AS I SHALL PROVE WITH MY NEXT WITNESS!
I NOW CALL TO THE STAND--
13

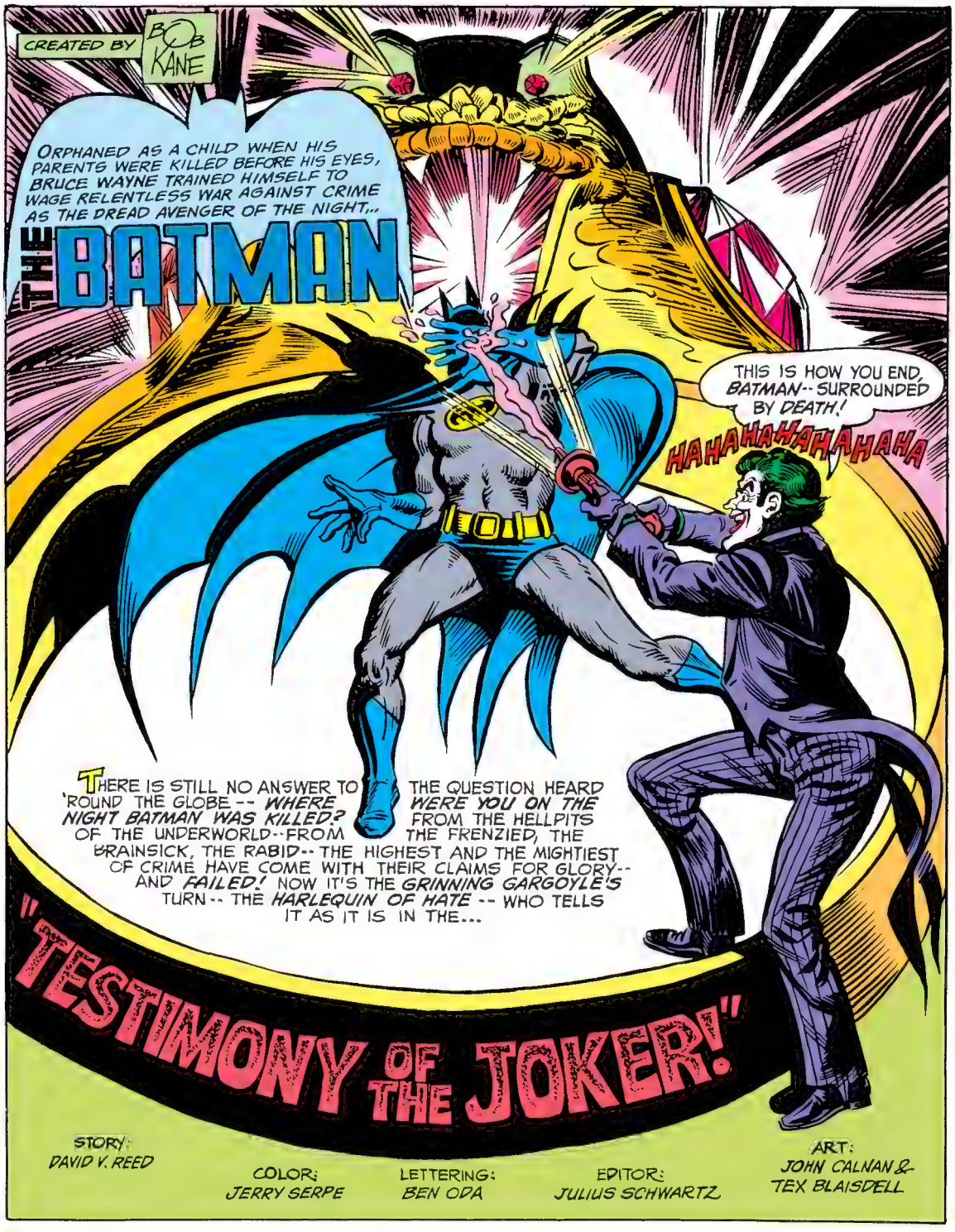
SUPERMAN!
DON'T PANIC! SUPERMAN IS HERE AS A WITNESS!
THERE'S AMNESTY FOR EVERYONE PRESENT!
KROOOM
AND WHEN THE COURT CALMS DOWN...
I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS TO PUT TO YOU, SUPERMAN--
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY... I'VE BEEN LISTENING IN ON THE TRIAL! I'LL TAKE IT FROM WHERE YOU LEFT OFF!
LUTHOR, HOW COULD YOU HOPE TO SUCCEED WHEN YOU BEGAN WITH A FATAL BLUNDER-- THAT MILLION-DOLLAR OFFER?
I COULDN'T HELP WONDERING WHY ANYONE WOULD PUT UP A MILLION FOR SOMETHING I'D GLADLY DO FREE-- JUST FOR THE ASKING!
"I INVESTIGATED... AND FOUND THAT IN ADDITION TO THE DONOR'S ANONYMITY, THE OUTFIT THROUGH WHOM THE MONEY WAS PAID WAS ALSO BEING KEPT SECRET-- SO I DECIDED TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE CHECK..."
ERAL BANK OF METROPO
No.
ARA
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Superman
$1,000,000 00/100 DOLL
SLEDGE AND WILLOCK
Jason Willock
1:02
"SLEDGE AND WILLOCK--LUTHOR'S FAVORITE LEGAL EAGLES!"
14


"THE MORE I PUZZLED OVER IT, THE MORE I DECIDED IT WAS A JOB FOR THE BATMAN! WE RENDEZVOUSED AT HIS HEAD-QUARTERS IN GOTHAM CITY..."
I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS... WHAT LUTHOR'S UP TO! THINK YOU CAN FIND OUT--?
THAT'S MY SPECIALTY!
SO NOW YOU KNOW, LUTHOR, WHO PUT THE BATMAN ON YOUR TAIL!
AFTER HE PENETRATED YOUR H.Q., HE BROUGHT BACK ENOUGH DATA ON SKYSURGEON TO FRUSTRATE YOUR WHOLE GHOULISH OPERATION!
"YOUR MASER RAY IS EASILY COUNTERED-- PROVIDED ONE KNOWS IT'S THERE..."
"I SET UP A MICROWAVE FREQUENCY-SCRAMBLER TO SCREEN ME ALL THE TIME I WAS ON STAGE!"
I'M NOT THE ACTOR BATMAN IS, BUT I GAVE A CONVINCING PERFORMANCE AFTER THE FLARE WENT OFF!
OBVIOUSLY, SINCE SKYSURGEON DIDN'T WORK FOR ME--NEITHER DID IT WORK ON THE BATMAN AT THE MUSEUM!
"THEN--AFTER HE AND I CHANGED PLACES-- AND YOU THOUGHT YOU'D CAPTURED ME IN THE BATMAN'S BODY-- DISORIENTED AND HELPLESS..."
WOK
"--WHAT YOU GOT WAS REALLY ME-- IN MY BODY!"
"INSTEAD OF A PUNCHING BAG FOR YOUR MURDEROUS FURY--"
SSSWOK
"--YOU GOT A WORKOUT THAT EXHAUSTED YOU! JUST BE GLAD I ROLLED WITH YOUR PUNCHES--TO KEEP YOU FROM BREAKING YOUR HANDS..."

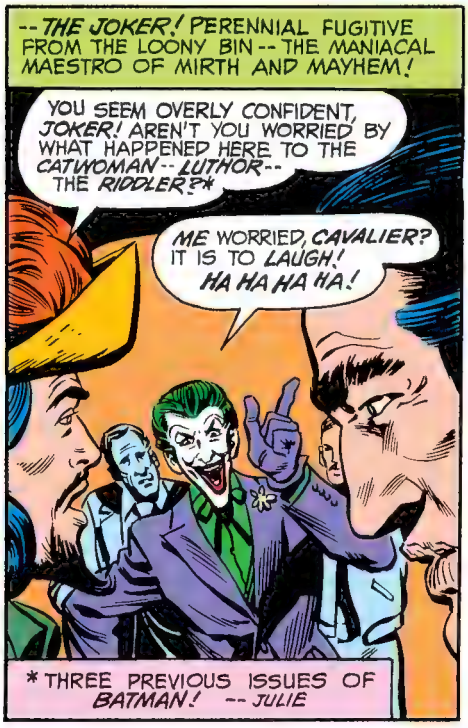
SO I LET YOU "KILL" ME... AND WHEN YOU SENT ME UP IN THAT COFFIN TO JOIN SKYSURGEON IN ORBIT--YOU SOLVED OUR REMAINING PROBLEM--
"--THE LOCATION OF YOUR RADAR-SHIELDED SATELLITE, WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE CONTINUE TO POSE A CONSTANT THREAT AS LONG AS IT WAS UP THERE!..."
"I EASILY TOOK CARE OF THAT!"
K-RUUUUOM
AS FOR THE BATMAN, THE LAST I SAW OF HIM WAS WHEN WE SWITCHED ROLES--AND WHILE I CAN'T ANSWER FOR WHAT MAY LATER HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM, IT'S NOW ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT LUTHOR DID NOT KILL THE BATMAN!
I PROMISED IMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE PRESENT IN THIS COURTROOM--BUT FOR LUTHOR, THAT ENDS THE MOMENT HE LEAVES HERE--
--AND I'LL BE WAITING!
16

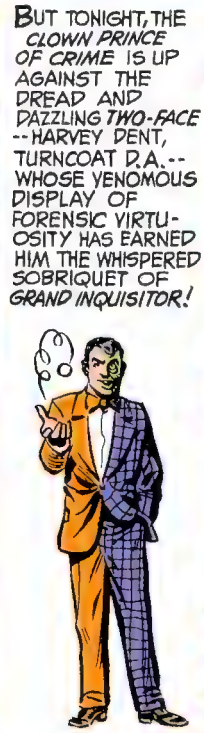
ONE MOMENT LATER...
MEMBERS OF THE JURY--HOW SAY YOU?
NOT GUILTY!
ALL RIGHT, I'VE LOST, BUT WHERE IS THE HONOR OF THIS COURT WHEN ITS GLORY-HUNGRY, UNPRINCIPLED PROSECUTOR CAN BE IN COLLUSION WITH THE ENEMY?
IT'S OBVIOUS THE WELL-NAMED TWO-FACE HAD MORE INFORMATION THAN I DID--BUT HOW DID HE GET IT?
HOW COULD HE ESTABLISH SUCH QUICK AND INTIMATE CONTACT WITH SUPERMAN? WHAT BETRAYALS AND SELLOUTS WERE INVOLVED?
AND YOU ALL HAVE THE GALL TO CALL YOURSELVES CRIMINALS! I'D RATHER FACE SUPERMAN THAN SPEND ANOTHER MINUTE AMONG YOU!
AND AFTER LEX LUTHOR MAKES HIS RAGING EXIT...
MR. DENT, WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY TO THOSE CHARGES?
YOUR HONOR, I CANNOT DISCLOSE MY METHODS WITHOUT MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THESE TRIALS TO CONTINUE!
BUT I GIVE YOU MY WORD EVERYTHING WILL BE PERFECTLY CLEAR AT A LATER DATE--AND THAT I HAVE DONE NOTHING TO COMPROMISE MY INTEGRITY!
THE COURT EXPRESSES ITS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE PROSECUTOR--AND LOOKS FORWARD TO THE NEXT SESSION!
SO DO I! HAHAHAHAHA!
AND WITH THAT MANIACAL LAUGH RINGING IN OUR EARS, COURT IS ADJOURNED TILL "THE TESTIMONY OF THE JOKER"

STARRING IN THIS ISSUE-- The Joker!
NO. 294 DEC. 30430 35¢
BATMAN
HA HA HA HA HA HA
SO LONG, BATMAN! THIS TIME I REALLY RUBBED YOU OUT!
WHAT A JOKE! EVEN IN DEATH--
--YOUR SECRET IDENTITY IS STILL A SECRET!
HA HA HA HA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DISSOLVER

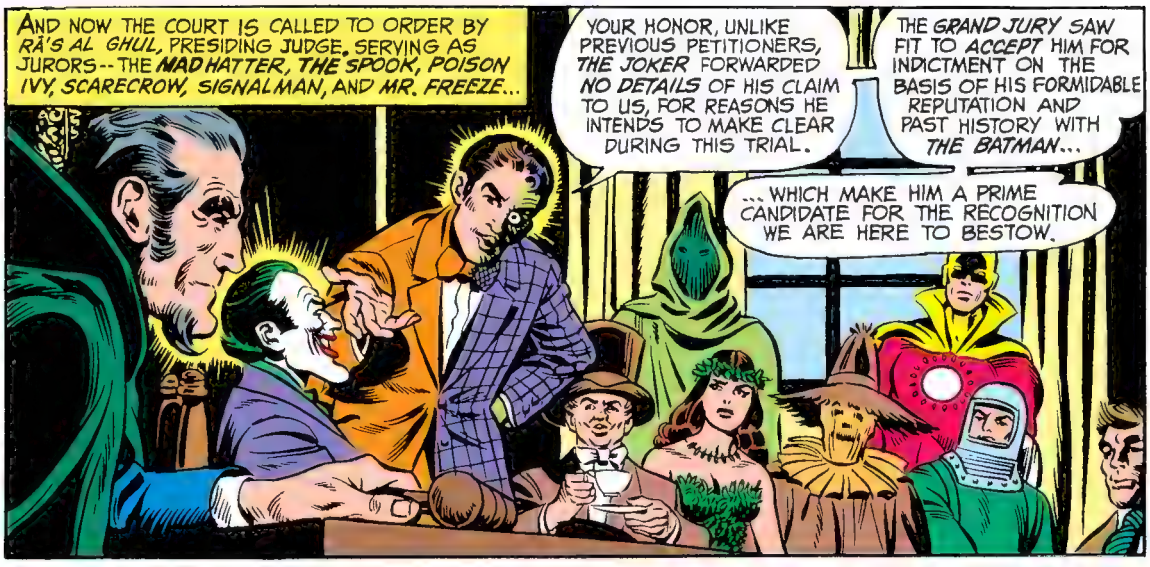

CREATED BY BOB KANE
ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...
THE BATMAN
THIS IS HOW YOU END, BATMAN-- SURROUNDED BY DEATH!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA
THERE IS STILL NO ANSWER TO THE QUESTION HEARD 'ROUND THE GLOBE -- WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED? FROM THE HELLPITS OF THE UNDERWORLD--FROM THE FRENZIED, THE BRAINSICK, THE RABID-- THE HIGHEST AND THE MIGHTIEST OF CRIME HAVE COME WITH THEIR CLAIMS FOR GLORY-- AND FAILED! NOW IT'S THE GRINNING GARGOYLE'S TURN -- THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE -- WHO TELLS IT AS IT IS IN THE...
"TESTIMONY OF THE JOKER!"
STORY: DAVID V. REED
COLOR: JERRY SERPE
LETTERING: BEN ODA
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
ART: JOHN CALNAN & TEX BLAISDELL

WE ARE PRESENT AT SESSION FOUR, AS THE HIGH TRIBUNAL OF CRIME RESUMES ITS EXTRAORDINARY SERIES OF TRIALS TO ESTABLISH THE IDENTITY OF THE BATMAN'S KILLER!
WIDELY HERALDED THROUGHOUT THE UNDERWORLD, THEIR PROMISE OF SENSATIONAL DISCLOSURES HAS BEEN MORE THAN FULFILLED!
HERE, IN THE REMOTE, GUARDED CONFINES OF A COUNTRY ESTATE, THE RANKING PEERS OF OUTLAWRY AVIDLY DISCUSS THE PROSPECTS OF THE NEXT CLAIMANT--

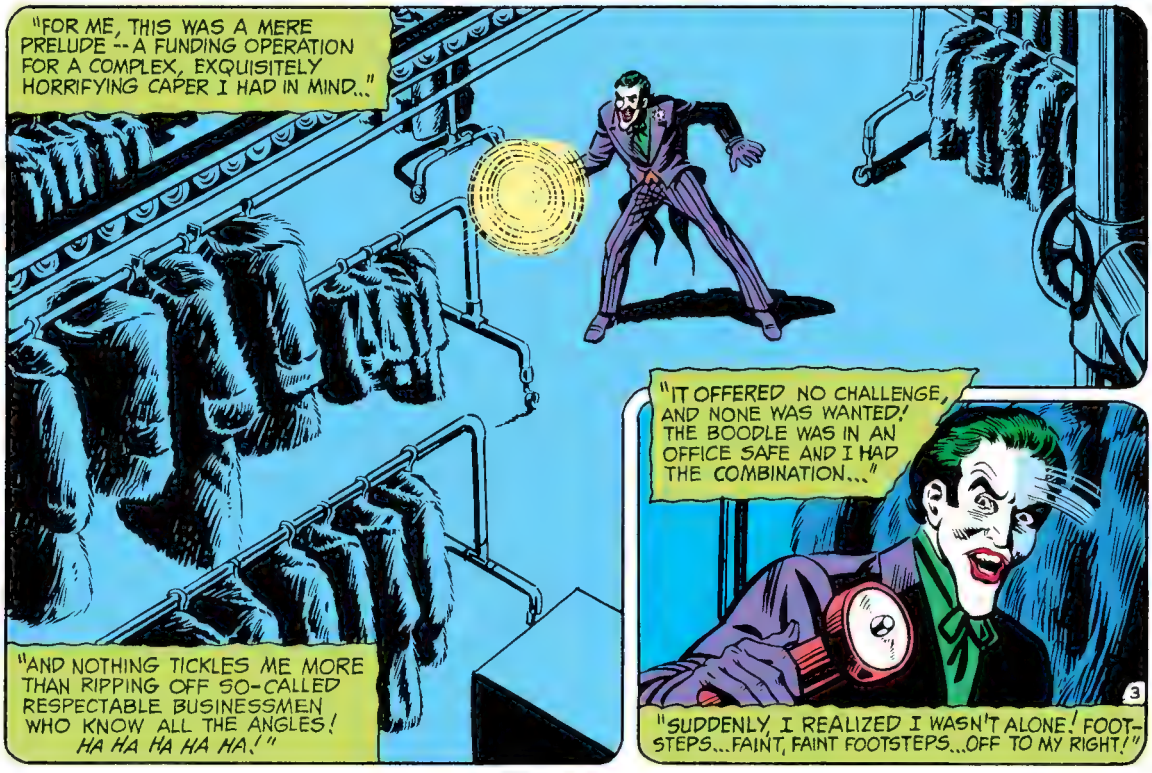

--THE JOKER! PERENNIAL FUGITIVE FROM THE LOONY BIN -- THE MANIACAL MAESTRO OF MIRTH AND MAYHEM!
YOU SEEM OVERLY CONFIDENT, JOKER! AREN'T YOU WORRIED BY WHAT HAPPENED HERE TO THE CATWOMAN -- LUTHOR -- THE RIDDLER?*
ME WORRIED, CAVALIER? IT IS TO LAUGH! HA HA HA HA!
* THREE PREVIOUS ISSUES OF BATMAN! -- JULIE

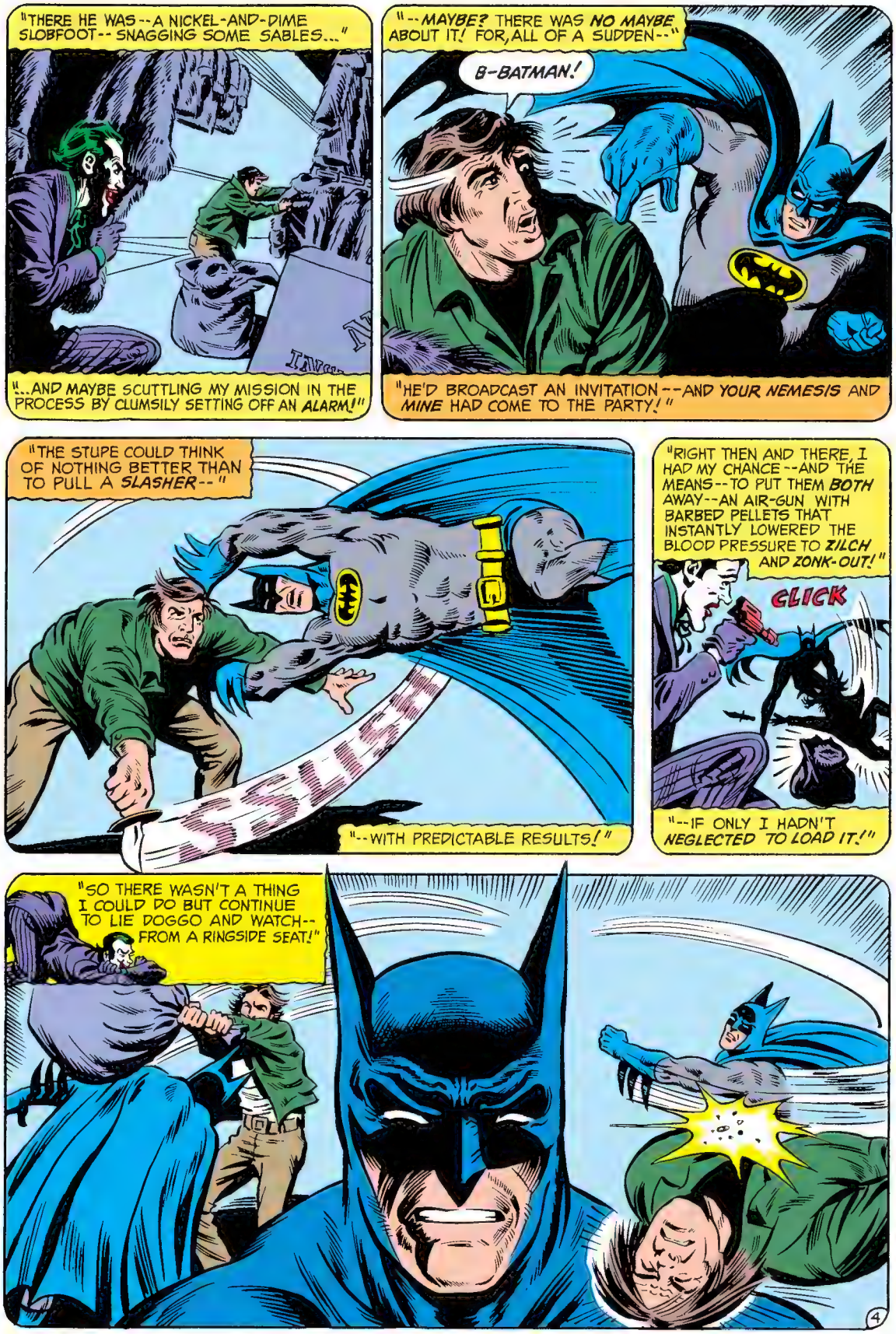

BUT TONIGHT, THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME IS UP AGAINST THE DREAD AND DAZZLING TWO-FACE -- HARVEY DENT, TURNCOAT D.A. -- WHOSE VENOMOUS DISPLAY OF FORENSIC VIRTUOSITY HAS EARNED HIM THE WHISPERED SOBRIQUET OF GRAND INQUISITOR!

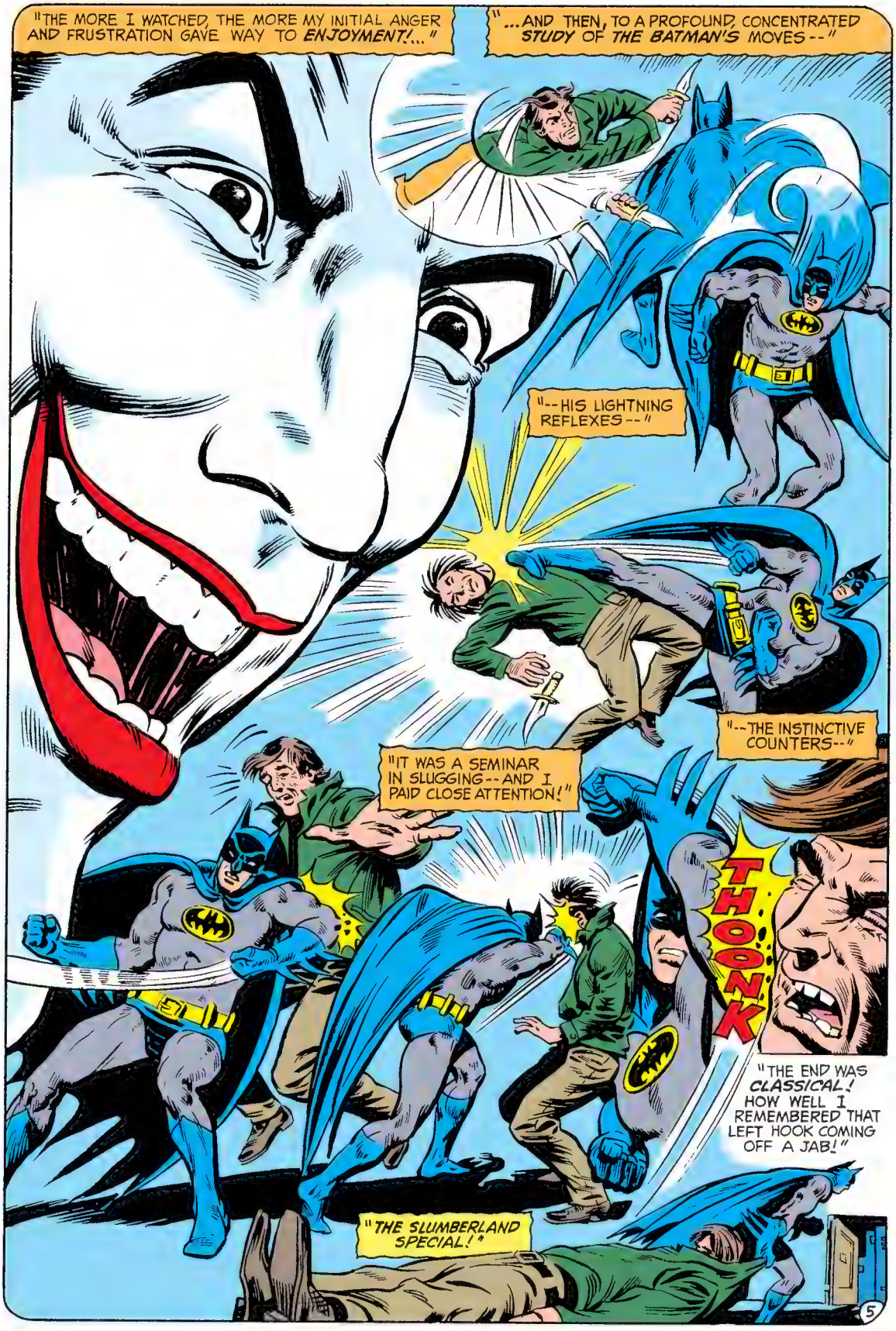
HAVE ANY CLUES TO WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN, TWO-FACE?
NOT IN THIS CASE, CLUEMASTER! YOU'LL SEE WHY IN A FEW MINUTES!
2

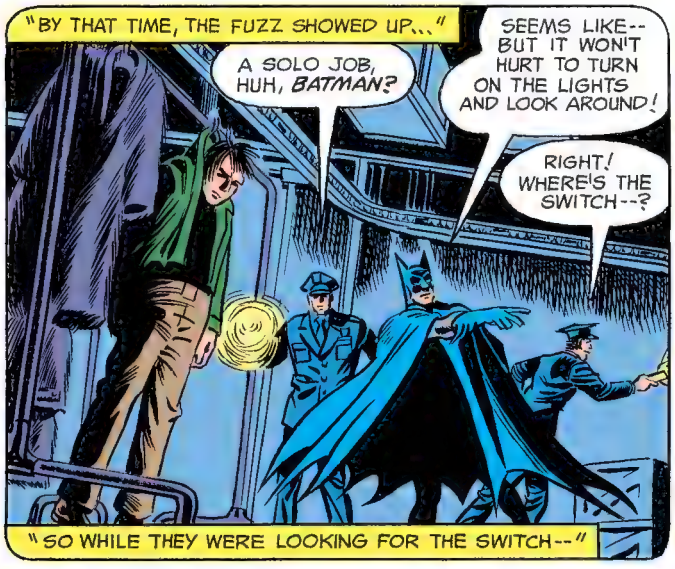

AND NOW THE COURT IS CALLED TO ORDER BY RA'S AL GHUL, PRESIDING JUDGE. SERVING AS JURORS -- THE MAD HATTER, THE SPOOK, POISON IVY, SCARECROW, SIGNALMAN, AND MR. FREEZE...
YOUR HONOR, UNLIKE PREVIOUS PETITIONERS, THE JOKER FORWARDED NO DETAILS OF HIS CLAIM TO US, FOR REASONS HE INTENDS TO MAKE CLEAR DURING THIS TRIAL.
THE GRAND JURY SAW FIT TO ACCEPT HIM FOR INDICTMENT ON THE BASIS OF HIS FORMIDABLE REPUTATION AND PAST HISTORY WITH THE BATMAN...
...WHICH MAKE HIM A PRIME CANDIDATE FOR THE RECOGNITION WE ARE HERE TO BESTOW.

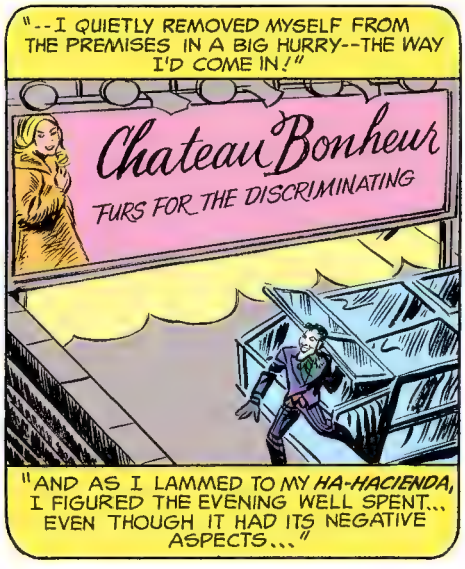
JOKER, WHERE WERE YOU ON THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?
THE ANSWER TO THAT IS -- EXACTLY WHERE I WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATMAN WAS KILLED!
--IN THE WAREHOUSE BUILDING OF THE CHATEAU BONHEUR FUR COMPANY, WHERE $500,000 IN SECRET REVENUE HAD BEEN STASHED TO AWAIT SHIPMENT TO SWISS BANKS!

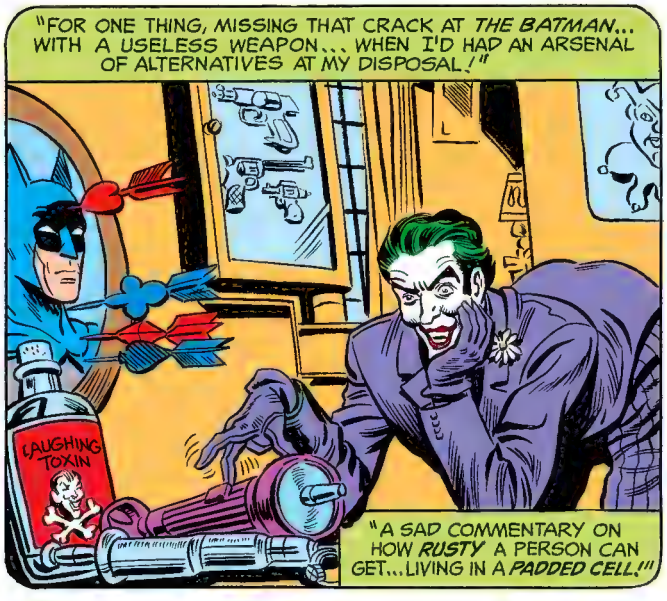

"FOR ME, THIS WAS A MERE PRELUDE -- A FUNDING OPERATION FOR A COMPLEX, EXQUISITELY HORRIFYING CAPER I HAD IN MIND..."
"AND NOTHING TICKLES ME MORE THAN RIPPING OFF SO-CALLED RESPECTABLE BUSINESSMEN WHO KNOW ALL THE ANGLES! HA HA HA HA HA!"
"IT OFFERED NO CHALLENGE, AND NONE WAS WANTED! THE BOODLE WAS IN AN OFFICE SAFE AND I HAD THE COMBINATION..."
3
"SUDDENLY, I REALIZED I WASN'T ALONE! FOOTSTEPS...FAINT, FAINT FOOTSTEPS...OFF TO MY RIGHT!"


"THERE HE WAS--A NICKEL-AND-DIME SLOBFOOT-- SNAGGING SOME SABLES..."
"...AND MAYBE SCUTTLING MY MISSION IN THE PROCESS BY CLUMSILY SETTING OFF AN ALARM!"
"--MAYBE? THERE WAS NO MAYBE ABOUT IT! FOR, ALL OF A SUDDEN--"
B-BATMAN!
"HE'D BROADCAST AN INVITATION--AND YOUR NEMESIS AND MINE HAD COME TO THE PARTY!"
"THE STUPE COULD THINK OF NOTHING BETTER THAN TO PULL A SLASHER--"
"--WITH PREDICTABLE RESULTS!"
"RIGHT THEN AND THERE, I HAD MY CHANCE--AND THE MEANS--TO PUT THEM BOTH AWAY--AN AIR-GUN WITH BARBED PELLETS THAT INSTANTLY LOWERED THE BLOOD PRESSURE TO ZILCH AND ZONK-OUT!"
CLICK
"--IF ONLY I HADN'T NEGLECTED TO LOAD IT!"
"SO THERE WASN'T A THING I COULD DO BUT CONTINUE TO LIE DOGGO AND WATCH-- FROM A RINGSIDE SEAT!"
4

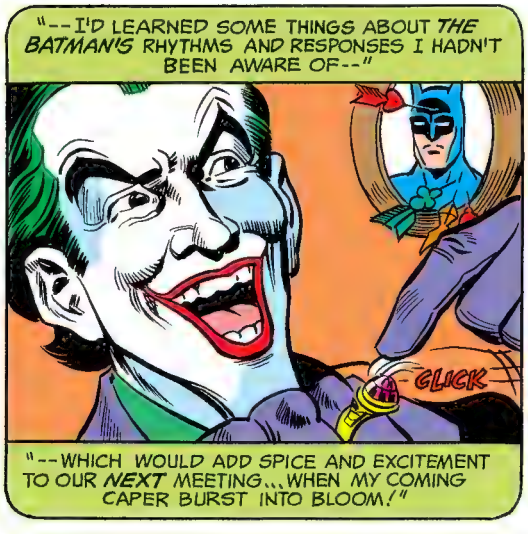

"THE MORE I WATCHED, THE MORE MY INITIAL ANGER AND FRUSTRATION GAVE WAY TO ENJOYMENT!..."
"...AND THEN, TO A PROFOUND, CONCENTRATED STUDY OF THE BATMAN'S MOVES--"
"--HIS LIGHTNING REFLEXES--"
"--THE INSTINCTIVE COUNTERS--"
"IT WAS A SEMINAR IN SLUGGING--AND I PAID CLOSE ATTENTION!"
THOONK
"THE END WAS CLASSICAL! HOW WELL I REMEMBERED THAT LEFT HOOK COMING OFF A JAB!"
"THE SLUMBERLAND SPECIAL!"
5

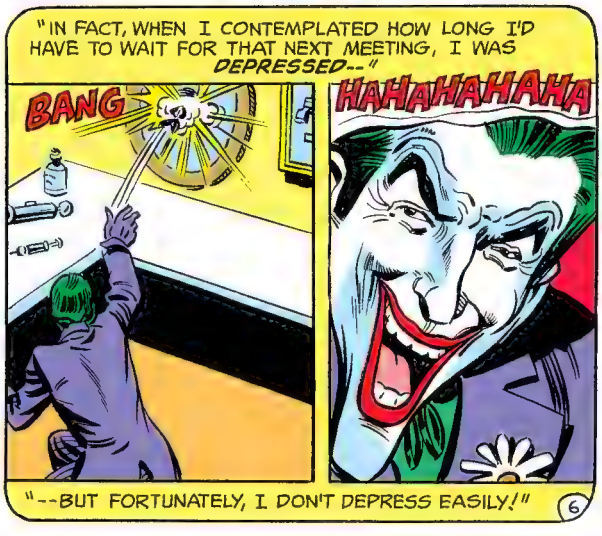

"BY THAT TIME, THE FUZZ SHOWED UP..."
A SOLO JOB, HUH, BATMAN?
SEEMS LIKE-- BUT IT WON'T HURT TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS AND LOOK AROUND!
RIGHT! WHERE'S THE SWITCH--?
"SO WHILE THEY WERE LOOKING FOR THE SWITCH--"


"--I QUIETLY REMOVED MYSELF FROM THE PREMISES IN A BIG HURRY--THE WAY I'D COME IN!"
Chateau Bonheur
FURS FOR THE DISCRIMINATING
"AND AS I LAMMED TO MY HA-HACIENDA, I FIGURED THE EVENING WELL SPENT... EVEN THOUGH IT HAD ITS NEGATIVE ASPECTS..."


"FOR ONE THING, MISSING THAT CRACK AT THE BATMAN... WITH A USELESS WEAPON... WHEN I'D HAD AN ARSENAL OF ALTERNATIVES AT MY DISPOSAL!"
LAUGHING TOXIN
"A SAD COMMENTARY ON HOW RUSTY A PERSON CAN GET... LIVING IN A PADDED CELL!"

"MOREOVER, I HADN'T COPPED THE LOOT--WHICH MEANT I'D HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER TRIP THE NEXT NIGHT..."
SNIK
"BUT ON THE POSITIVE SIDE--"


"--I'D LEARNED SOME THINGS ABOUT THE BATMAN'S RHYTHMS AND RESPONSES I HADN'T BEEN AWARE OF--"
CLICK
"--WHICH WOULD ADD SPICE AND EXCITEMENT TO OUR NEXT MEETING... WHEN MY COMING CAPER BURST INTO BLOOM!"

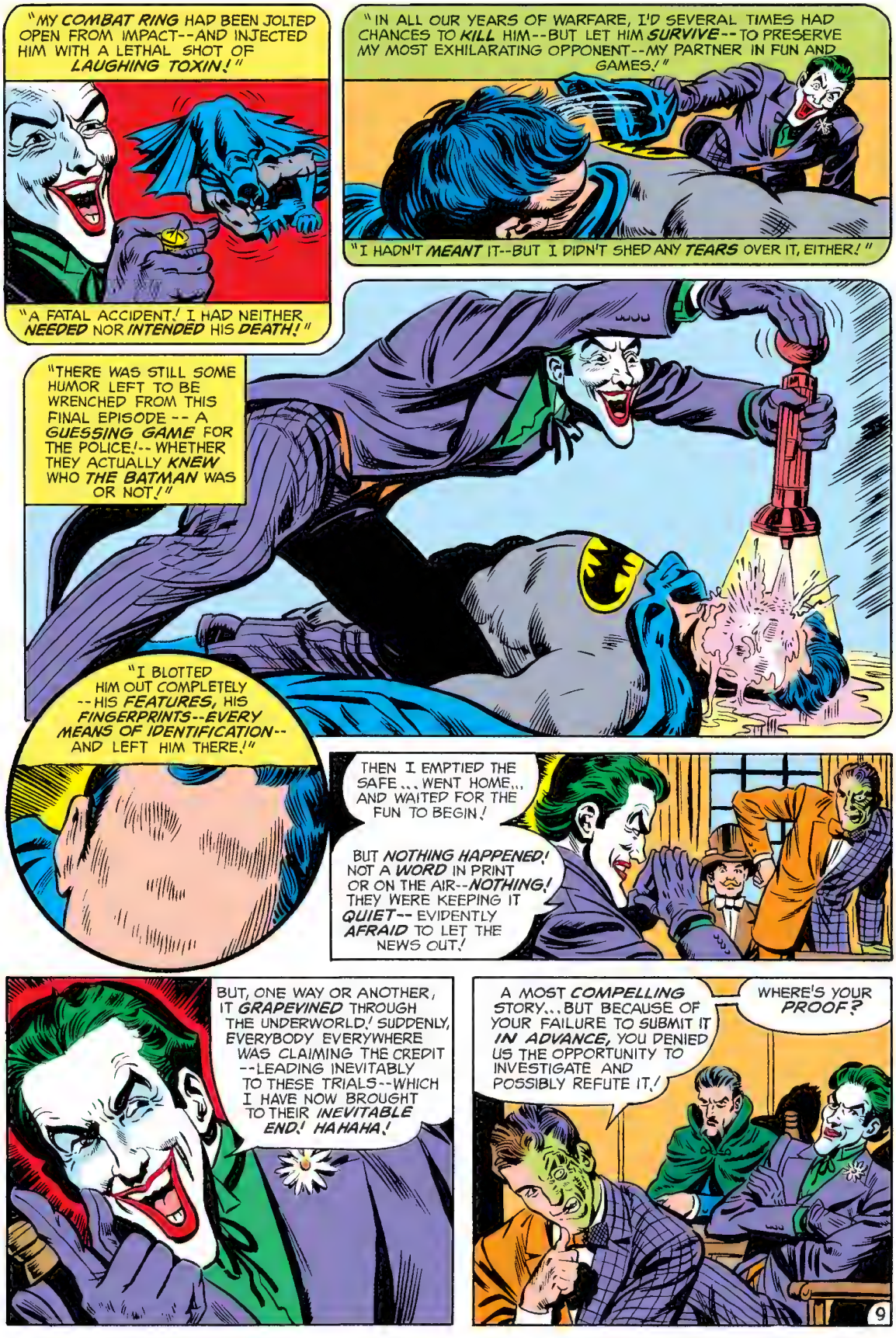

"IN FACT, WHEN I CONTEMPLATED HOW LONG I'D HAVE TO WAIT FOR THAT NEXT MEETING, I WAS DEPRESSED--"
BANG
HAHAHAHAHA
"--BUT FORTUNATELY, I DON'T DEPRESS EASILY!"

"THE FOLLOWING NIGHT..."
"MY CIRCUIT-BYPASS ON THE SKYLIGHT ALARM WAS STILL IN PLACE... JUST AS I'D LEFT IT--"
OFF
"OBVIOUSLY, THAT CLUNK'S INEPT BREAK-IN THE NIGHT BEFORE, VIA THE FIRE ESCAPE, HAD CONVINCED THEM THEIR SYSTEM WAS FAULTLESS!"
"IT WAS SO EASY THAT, POSSIBLY, I WAS A BIT CARELESS... MOVING TOO FAST... BECAUSE--"
INCREDIBLE! UTTERLY... INCREDIBLE!
"--JUST AS I REACHED THE SPOT WHERE I'D BEEN STYMIED THE NIGHT BEFORE, THERE HE WAS--"
"--THE BATMAN! BUT THE STRANGEST PART OF IT WAS--HE SEEMED EVEN MORE ASTONISHED TO SEE ME!"
GASP! THE JOKER!
"HE STOOD THERE... MOTIONLESS... ROOTED--THEN HE STARTED TO SAY, 'LISTEN, JOKER'--"
"--BUT THAT WAS AS FAR AS HE GOT..."
I'M LISTENING! AND I LIKE WHAT I HEAR! HAHAHA!
ARRRGGGHHH!
"FOR OPENERS, I POPPED HIM WITH A BLINDING DOSE OF DISSOLVING FLUID!"
"THEN--AS HE DOUBLED UP--TRYING TO SHIELD HIMSELF..."
"...DOWN HE WENT--LIKE A DEAD WEIGHT!"

"IT WAS LIKE A *DREAM*--"
"NO MATTER WHAT HE TRIED--
I COULD DO *NO WRONG!*"
"WITH
HIS VISION
BLURRED, MOST OF
HIS BLOWS *MISSED*--"
"AND
THE FEW
THAT LANDED
WERE *MEANINGLESS!*"
"AND STILL HE KEPT COMING ON--AND *ON*--AND *ON*--"

"--UNTIL I THREW THE *FINISHER*--"
WOK
"--AND EVEN THEN, HE *GRINNED* AT ME--OR
SO I THOUGHT--"

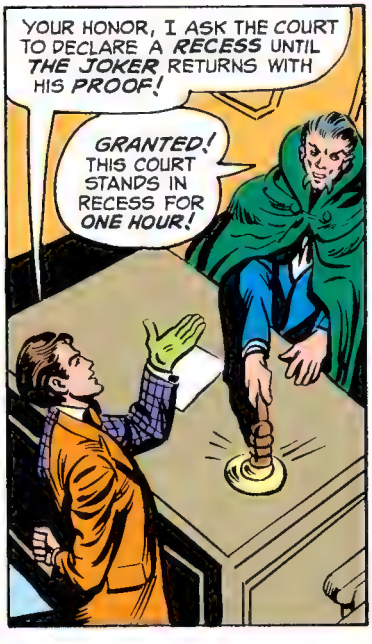
"--BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT--WHEN HE SANK
DOWN--*CONVULSED WITH LAUGHTER*--"
HAHHA
HAHAHA
"--AND I REALIZED WHAT HAD HAPPENED!"


"MY COMBAT RING HAD BEEN JOLTED OPEN FROM IMPACT--AND INJECTED HIM WITH A LETHAL SHOT OF LAUGHING TOXIN!"
"A FATAL ACCIDENT! I HAD NEITHER NEEDED NOR INTENDED HIS DEATH!"
"IN ALL OUR YEARS OF WARFARE, I'D SEVERAL TIMES HAD CHANCES TO KILL HIM--BUT LET HIM SURVIVE--TO PRESERVE MY MOST EXHILARATING OPPONENT--MY PARTNER IN FUN AND GAMES!"
"I HADN'T MEANT IT--BUT I DIDN'T SHED ANY TEARS OVER IT, EITHER!"
"THERE WAS STILL SOME HUMOR LEFT TO BE WRENCHED FROM THIS FINAL EPISODE -- A GUESSING GAME FOR THE POLICE!-- WHETHER THEY ACTUALLY KNEW WHO THE BATMAN WAS OR NOT!"
"I BLOTTED HIM OUT COMPLETELY --HIS FEATURES, HIS FINGERPRINTS--EVERY MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION-- AND LEFT HIM THERE!"
THEN I EMPTIED THE SAFE... WENT HOME... AND WAITED FOR THE FUN TO BEGIN!
BUT NOTHING HAPPENED! NOT A WORD IN PRINT OR ON THE AIR--NOTHING! THEY WERE KEEPING IT QUIET-- EVIDENTLY AFRAID TO LET THE NEWS OUT!
BUT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IT GRAPEVINED THROUGH THE UNDERWORLD! SUDDENLY, EVERYBODY EVERYWHERE WAS CLAIMING THE CREDIT --LEADING INEVITABLY TO THESE TRIALS--WHICH I HAVE NOW BROUGHT TO THEIR INEVITABLE END! HAHAHA!
A MOST COMPELLING STORY... BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR FAILURE TO SUBMIT IT IN ADVANCE, YOU DENIED US THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE AND POSSIBLY REFUTE IT!
WHERE'S YOUR PROOF?

YOU KNOW THE JOKER BETTER THAN THAT, TWO-FACE! YOU KNOW I'D NEVER COME HERE WITHOUT SOMETHING TANGIBLE TO BACK UP MY WORDS!
I DO HAVE PROOF-- AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I DIDN'T SUBMIT A WRITTEN CLAIM!

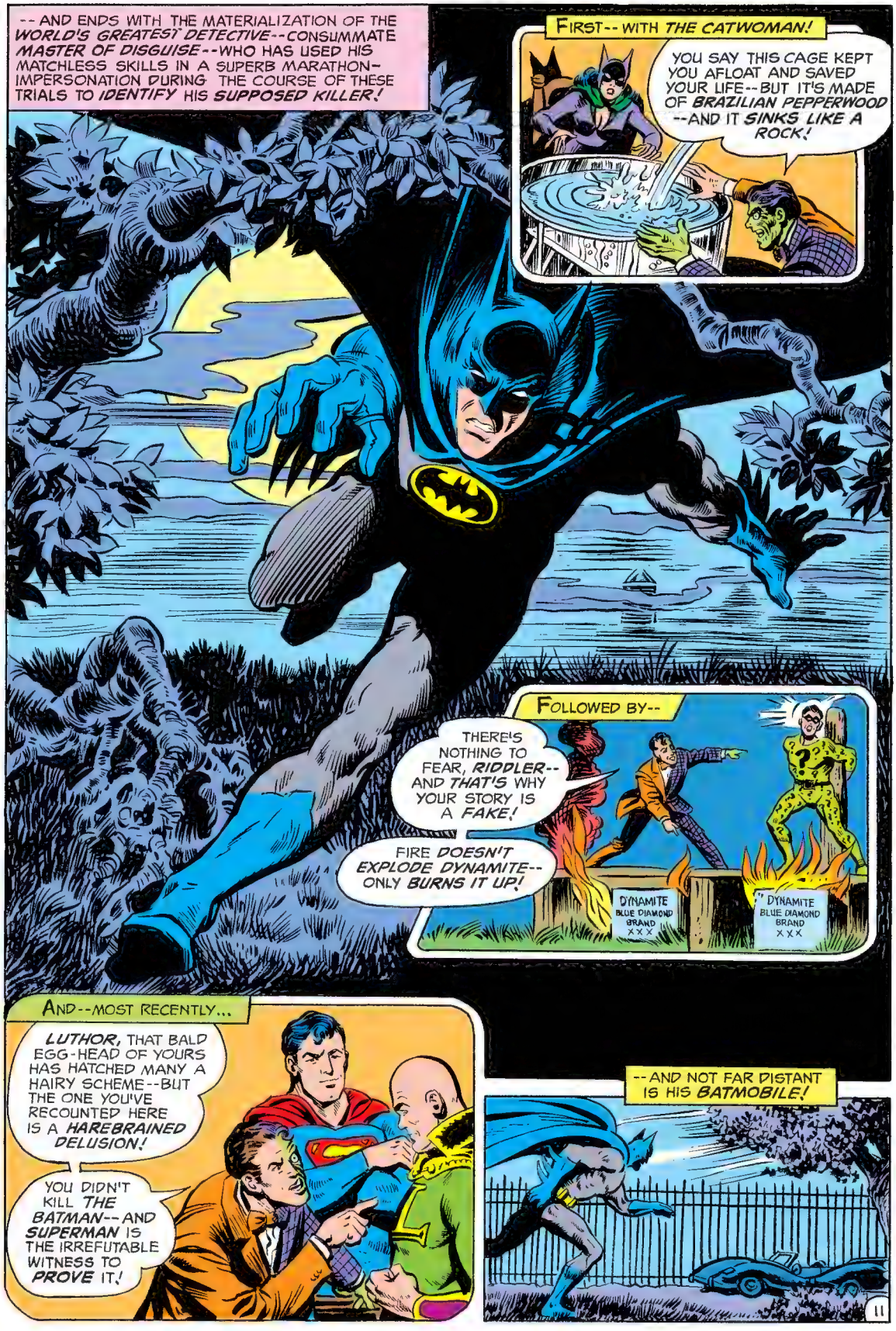
ANYONE WHO READ THAT CLAIM--AND WHO KNEW ME--WOULD NEVER DOUBT THAT I HAD EVIDENCE--EVIDENCE WHICH, IF STOLEN--
--COULD BE USED BY ANYONE TO CLAIM THE CREDIT FOR THE BATMAN'S DEATH--WITH A STORY INVENTED TO GO WITH IT!
AND WHAT MIGHT THAT EVIDENCE BE?

PHOTOGRAPHS I TOOK OF THE DEAD BATMAN--BEFORE I OBLITERATED HIS IDENTITY!
AND YOU HAVE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WITH YOU?
HA-HA-HA! YOU DON'T REALLY THINK I'D CARRY SOMETHING THAT VALUABLE--IN A ROOM FULL OF PEOPLE LIKE US--WITHOUT FIRST GETTING MY STORY ON RECORD IN OPEN COURT?


YOUR HONOR, I ASK THE COURT TO DECLARE A RECESS UNTIL THE JOKER RETURNS WITH HIS PROOF!
GRANTED! THIS COURT STANDS IN RECESS FOR ONE HOUR!

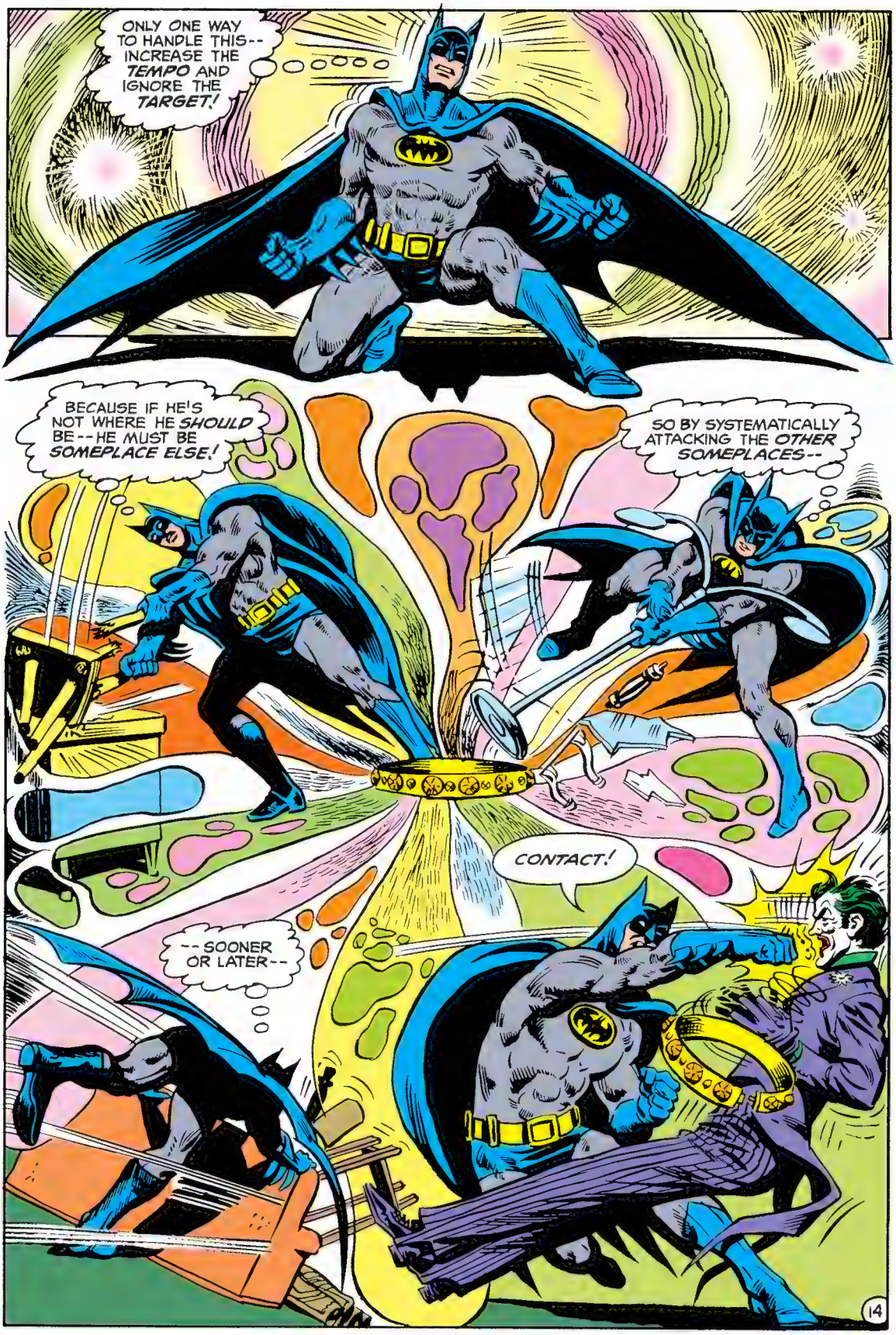
AS THE SESSION BREAKS, EXCITEMENT IS AT FEVER PITCH..."
YOU'RE OKAY, BIG JAY!
YOU GOT IT MADE, LAUGHING BOY!
HURRY--
--BACK!

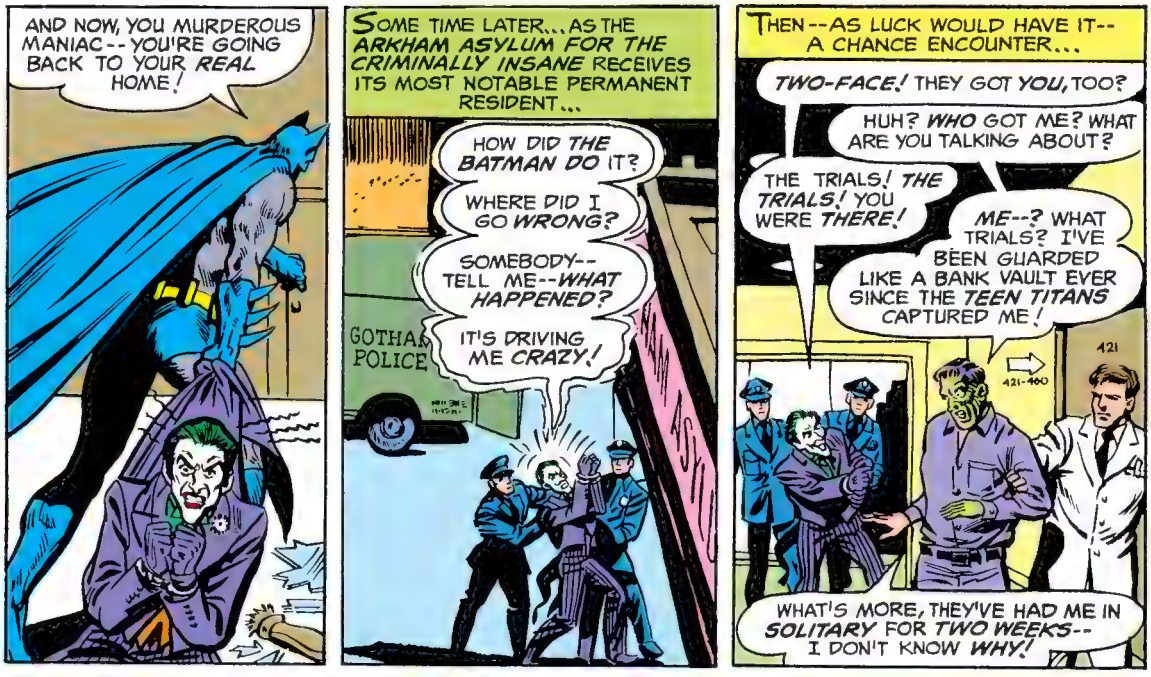
MOMENTS LATER, AS TWO-FACE SURREPTITIOUSLY LEAVES THE MANSION AND STARTS RUNNING THROUGH THE DARK, SURROUNDING FIELDS--AN ASTOUNDING METAMORPHOSIS UNFOLDS!...
...IT BEGINS WITH HIM SAVAGELY RIPPING AWAY AT HIS SCARRED AND TWISTED VISAGE--

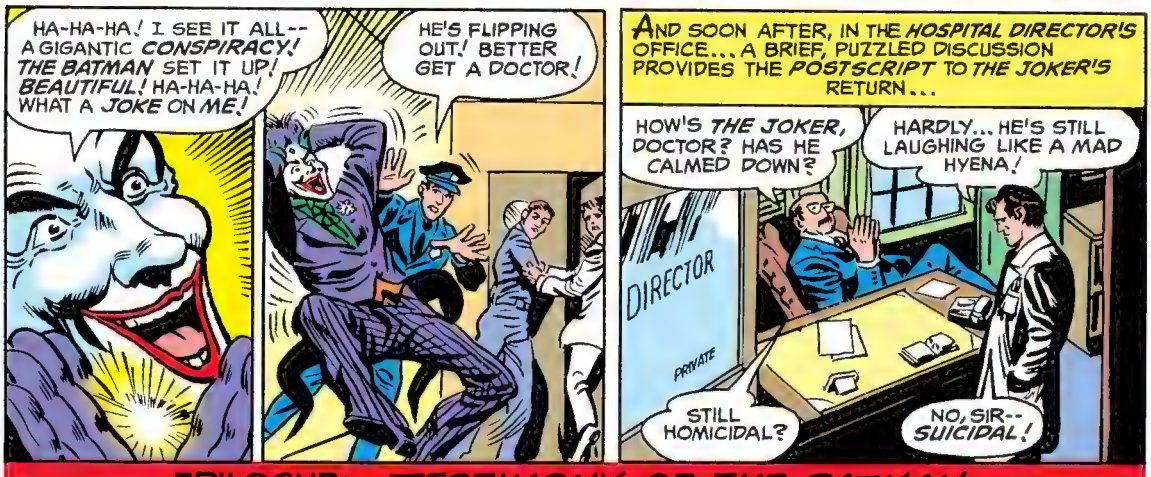

--AND ENDS WITH THE MATERIALIZATION OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE--CONSUMMATE MASTER OF DISGUISE--WHO HAS USED HIS MATCHLESS SKILLS IN A SUPERB MARATHON-IMPERSONATION DURING THE COURSE OF THESE TRIALS TO IDENTIFY HIS SUPPOSED KILLER!
FIRST--WITH THE CATWOMAN!
YOU SAY THIS CAGE KEPT YOU AFLOAT AND SAVED YOUR LIFE--BUT IT'S MADE OF BRAZILIAN PEPPERWOOD --AND IT SINKS LIKE A ROCK!
FOLLOWED BY--
THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR, RIDDLER-- AND THAT'S WHY YOUR STORY IS A FAKE!
FIRE DOESN'T EXPLODE DYNAMITE-- ONLY BURNS IT UP!
DYNAMITE BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX
DYNAMITE BLUE DIAMOND BRAND XXX
AND--MOST RECENTLY...
LUTHOR, THAT BALD EGG-HEAD OF YOURS HAS HATCHED MANY A HAIRY SCHEME--BUT THE ONE YOU'VE RECOUNTED HERE IS A HAREBRAINED DELUSION!
YOU DIDN'T KILL THE BATMAN--AND SUPERMAN IS THE IRREFUTABLE WITNESS TO PROVE IT!
--AND NOT FAR DISTANT IS HIS BATMOBILE!

TWENTY MINUTES LATER...
A BUG--PLANTED ON THE JOKER BY THE BATMAN AS THEY LEFT THE COURT-ROOM-- HAS LED HIM UNERRINGLY TO THE LAIR OF THE ACE OF KNAVES!
INSIDE HIS HA-HACIENDA, THE GLEEFUL JOKER GATHERS UP HIS "EVIDENCE"...
WAIT TILL THEY SEE THESE! THEY'LL JUMP OUT OF THEIR SKINS!
HIS EVIL HEART BRIMMING WITH JOY, HE PAUSES A MOMENT TO CHUCKLE REMINISCENTLY AS HE RELIVES THAT NIGHT OF TRIUMPH...
HAHAHAHA
...WHEN SUDDENLY...
BAT-CUFFS--?!?
CLIK!
NO... NO! YOU'RE DEAD!
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW... YOU KILLED ME!
HA-HA-HA! I CAN'T BEGIN TO IMAGINE HOW YOU DID IT, BATMAN-- BUT THIS IS THE MOST FRIGHTFUL JOKE EVER PLAYED ON THE JOKER!
NOW--ONE GOOD JOKE DESERVES ANOTHER--!
12

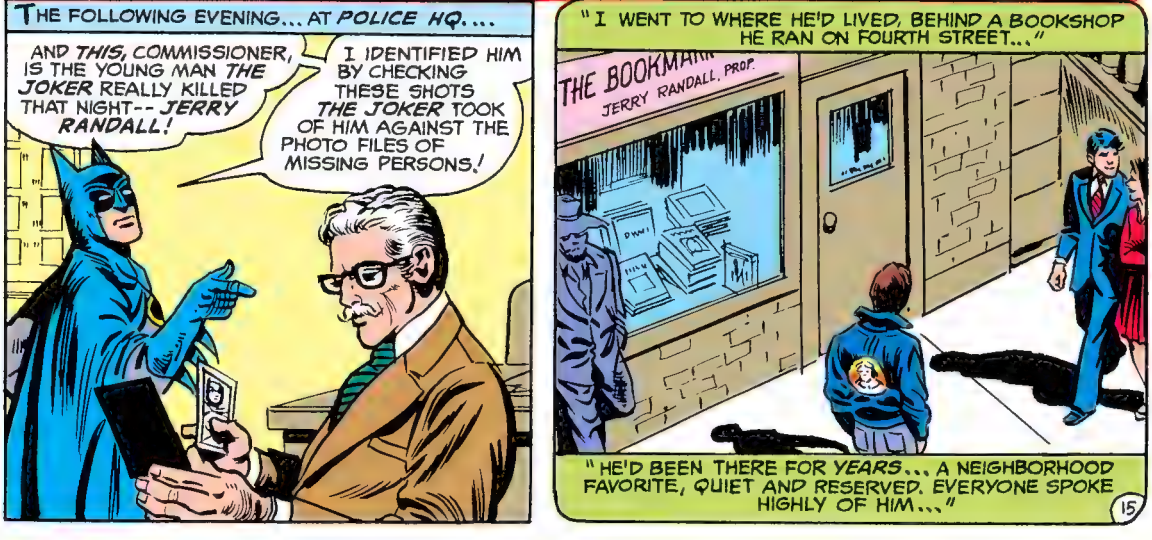
MY LATEST GADGET, BATMAN-- A BEJEWELED CIRCLET THAT RADIATES HEAT--
--CREATING ANTIPODAL LAYERS OF AIR--TO BEND LIGHT-RAYS--
--PRODUCING REFRACTION--
--DISTORTION--
--AND MIRAGE! HAHAHAHAHA!

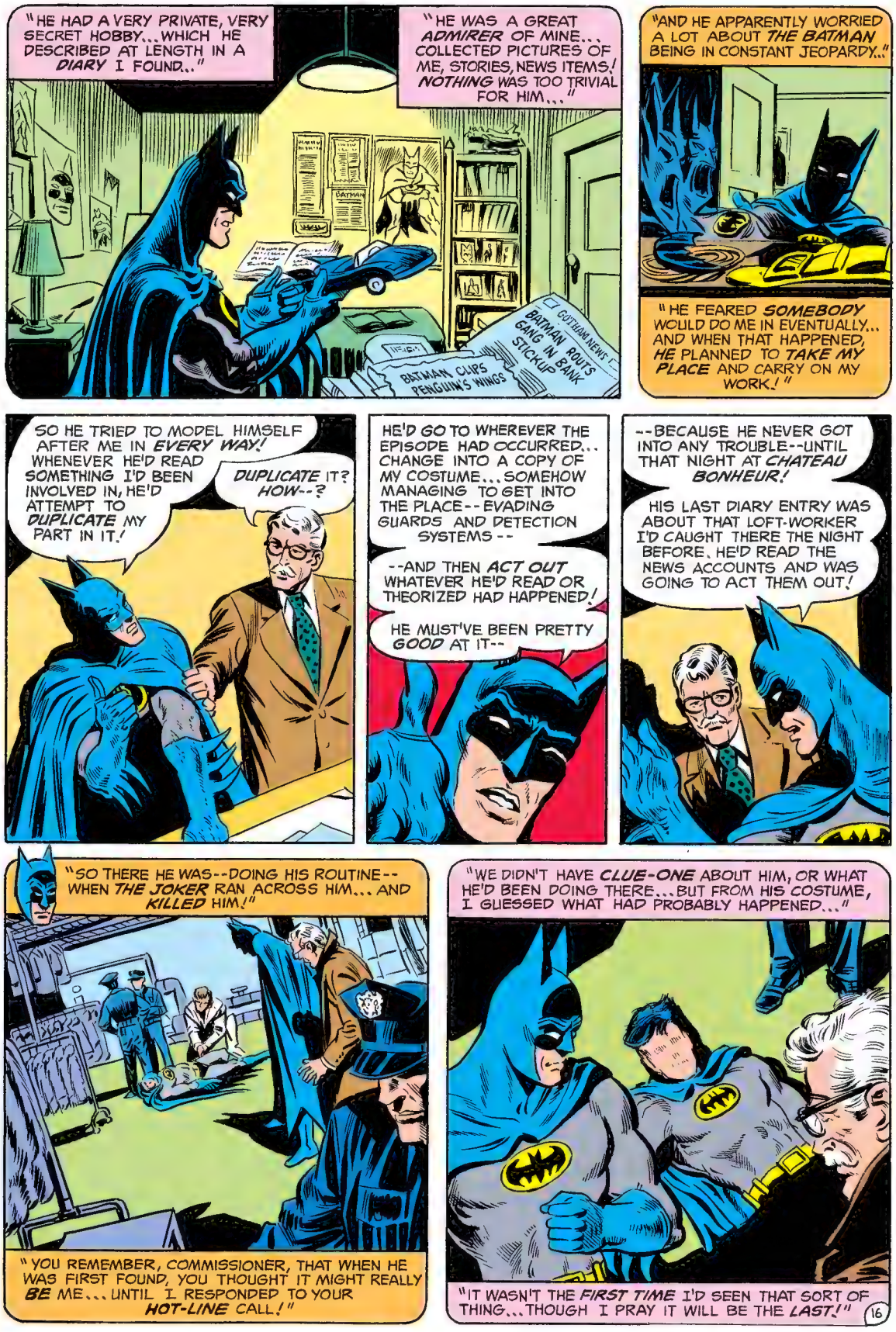

ONLY ONE WAY TO HANDLE THIS-- INCREASE THE TEMPO AND IGNORE THE TARGET!
BECAUSE IF HE'S NOT WHERE HE SHOULD BE--HE MUST BE SOMEPLACE ELSE!
SO BY SYSTEMATICALLY ATTACKING THE OTHER SOMEPLACES--
CONTACT!
--SOONER OR LATER--



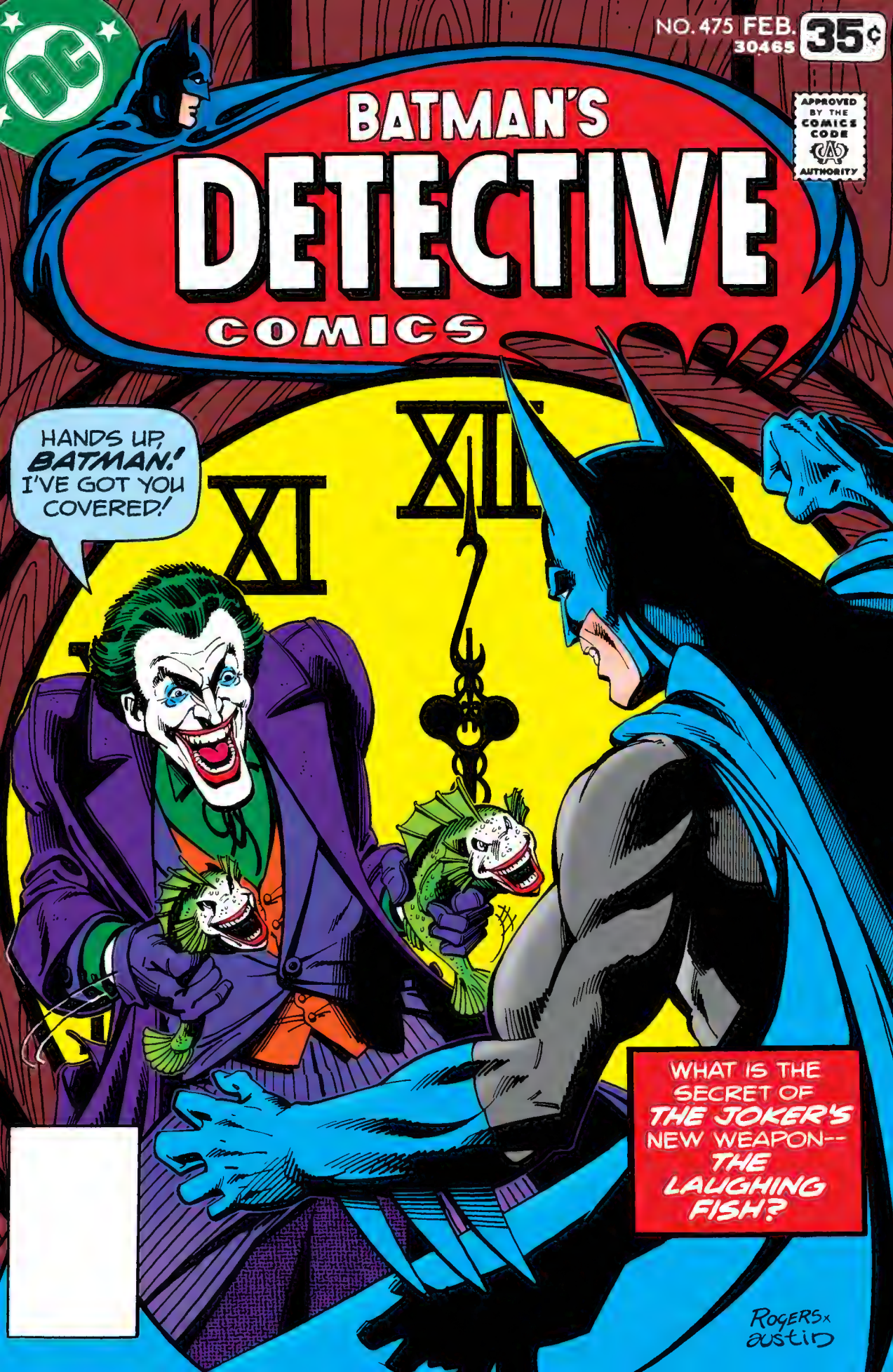


EPILOGUE: *TESTIMONY OF THE BATMAN*




"HE HAD A VERY PRIVATE, VERY SECRET HOBBY...WHICH HE DESCRIBED AT LENGTH IN A DIARY I FOUND..."
"HE WAS A GREAT ADMIRER OF MINE... COLLECTED PICTURES OF ME, STORIES, NEWS ITEMS! NOTHING WAS TOO TRIVIAL FOR HIM..."
BATMAN CLIPS PENGUIN'S WINGS
GOTHAM NEWS
BATMAN ROUTS GANG IN BANK STICKUP
"AND HE APPARENTLY WORRIED A LOT ABOUT THE BATMAN BEING IN CONSTANT JEOPARDY..."
"HE FEARED SOMEBODY WOULD DO ME IN EVENTUALLY... AND WHEN THAT HAPPENED, HE PLANNED TO TAKE MY PLACE AND CARRY ON MY WORK!"
SO HE TRIED TO MODEL HIMSELF AFTER ME IN EVERY WAY! WHENEVER HE'D READ SOMETHING I'D BEEN INVOLVED IN, HE'D ATTEMPT TO DUPLICATE MY PART IN IT!
DUPLICATE IT? HOW--?
HE'D GO TO WHEREVER THE EPISODE HAD OCCURRED... CHANGE INTO A COPY OF MY COSTUME...SOMEHOW MANAGING TO GET INTO THE PLACE--EVADING GUARDS AND DETECTION SYSTEMS--
--AND THEN ACT OUT WHATEVER HE'D READ OR THEORIZED HAD HAPPENED!
HE MUST'VE BEEN PRETTY GOOD AT IT--
--BECAUSE HE NEVER GOT INTO ANY TROUBLE--UNTIL THAT NIGHT AT CHATEAU BONHEUR!
HIS LAST DIARY ENTRY WAS ABOUT THAT LOFT-WORKER I'D CAUGHT THERE THE NIGHT BEFORE. HE'D READ THE NEWS ACCOUNTS AND WAS GOING TO ACT THEM OUT!
"SO THERE HE WAS--DOING HIS ROUTINE--WHEN THE JOKER RAN ACROSS HIM... AND KILLED HIM!"
"YOU REMEMBER, COMMISSIONER, THAT WHEN HE WAS FIRST FOUND, YOU THOUGHT IT MIGHT REALLY BE ME... UNTIL I RESPONDED TO YOUR HOT-LINE CALL!"
"WE DIDN'T HAVE CLUE-ONE ABOUT HIM, OR WHAT HE'D BEEN DOING THERE...BUT FROM HIS COSTUME, I GUESSED WHAT HAD PROBABLY HAPPENED..."
"IT WASN'T THE FIRST TIME I'D SEEN THAT SORT OF THING...THOUGH I PRAY IT WILL BE THE LAST!"

IT'S SOMETHING THAT HAS WEIGHED ON ME A LONG TIME... THESE PEOPLE TRYING TO IMITATE ME... OFTEN WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS! AS YOU KNOW, I SWORE I'D GET WHOEVER HAD MURDERED THAT POOR LAD!
I WAS SURE THE KILLER THOUGHT HE'D DESTROYED THE BATMAN--AND IF HE DIDN'T ADVERTISE IT, NEITHER WOULD HE LET ANYBODY ELSE CLAIM THE GLORY!
SO, THROUGH ABSOLUTELY TRUSTWORTHY UNDERWORLD CONNECTIONS, I PLANTED CONFLICTING RUMORS FROM GOTHAM TO FRISCO THAT I WAS DEAD... KILLED IN ACTION!
THEN, WITH TWO-FACE SAFE AT ARKHAM, I HAD HIM PUT IN SOLITARY--AND ASSUMED HIS IDENTITY!
I PRESENTED MYSELF TO "JAKE-THE-CLAW" VAN CLEEVE AND SOLD HIM ON THE TRIALS--WITH ME AS PROSECUTOR--AND WITH HIS PRESTIGE AMONG THE TOP DOGS OF CRIME, THE REST WAS EASY!
I KNEW THAT ONLY THE REAL KILLER WOULD KNOW THE TRUE DETAILS OF "MY" MURDER!
--AND THAT TURNED OUT TO BE THE JOKER!
WELL, SIR, THAT'S IT! I'LL BE GOING NOW... I HAVE A JOB TO DO...
AND SO, WITH THE END OF ONE OF THE BATMAN'S MOST BRILLIANT EXPLOITS, IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE THE UNDERWORLD GETS THE MESSAGE--AND THIS TIME IT IS NO RUMOR!
BATMAN IS ALIVE AND WELL--AND LIVING IN GOTHAM CITY
THE END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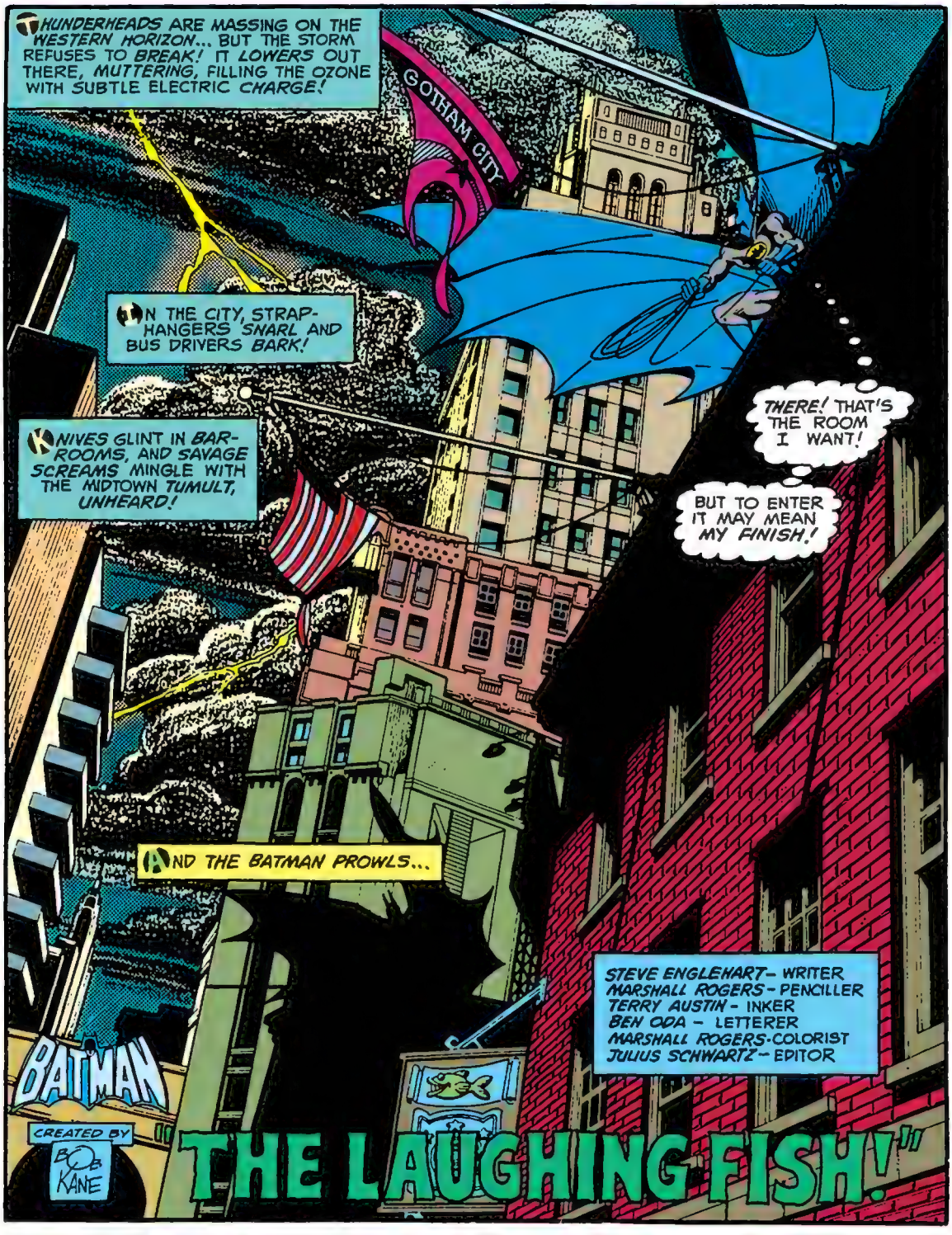
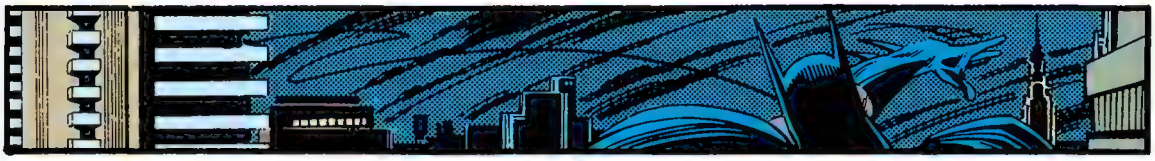
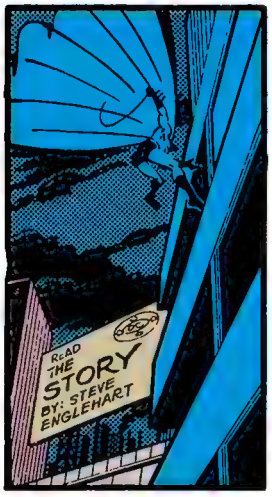
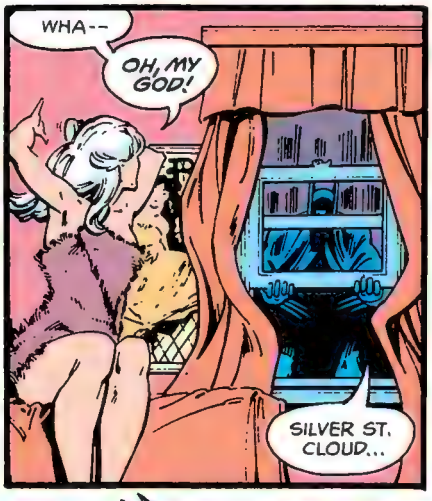
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BATMAN'S
DETECTIVE
COMICS
HANDS UP, BATMAN! I'VE GOT YOU COVERED!
XI
XII
WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THE JOKER'S NEW WEAPON-- THE LAUGHING FISH?
ROGERS x austin

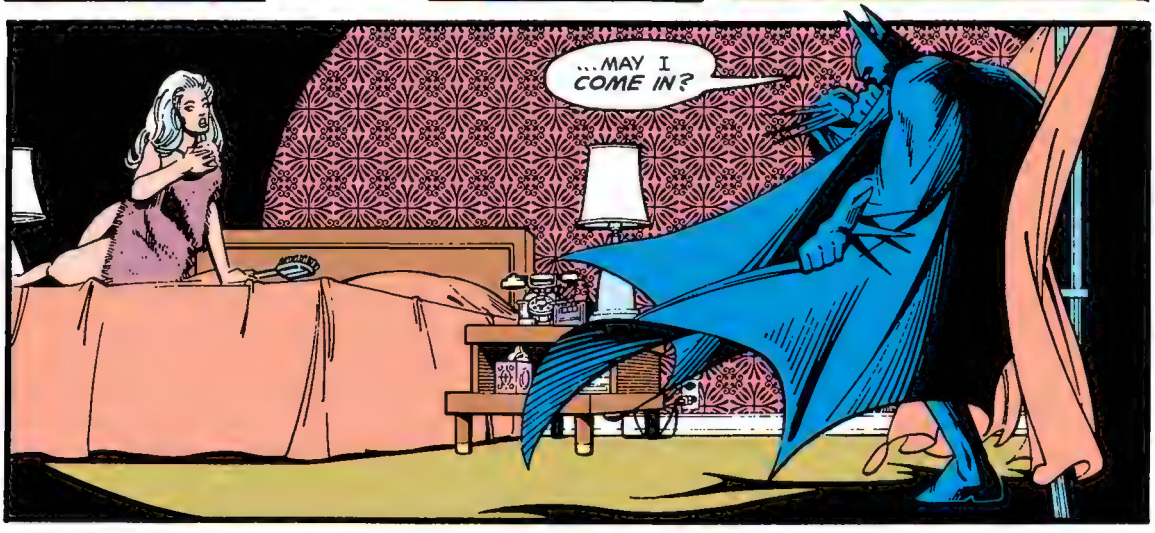

THUNDERHEADS ARE MASSING ON THE WESTERN HORIZON... BUT THE STORM REFUSES TO BREAK! IT LOWERS OUT THERE, MUTTERING, FILLING THE OZONE WITH SUBTLE ELECTRIC CHARGE!
GOTHAM CITY
IN THE CITY, STRAP-HANGERS SNARL AND BUS DRIVERS BARK!
KNIVES GLINT IN BAR-ROOMS, AND SAVAGE SCREAMS MINGLE WITH THE MIDTOWN TUMULT, UNHEARD!
THERE! THAT'S THE ROOM I WANT!
BUT TO ENTER IT MAY MEAN MY FINISH!
AND THE BATMAN PROWLS...
STEVE ENGLEHART- WRITER
MARSHALL ROGERS - PENCILLER
TERRY AUSTIN - INKER
BEN ODA - LETTERER
MARSHALL ROGERS-COLORIST
JULIUS SCHWARTZ - EDITOR
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
"THE LAUGHING FISH!"



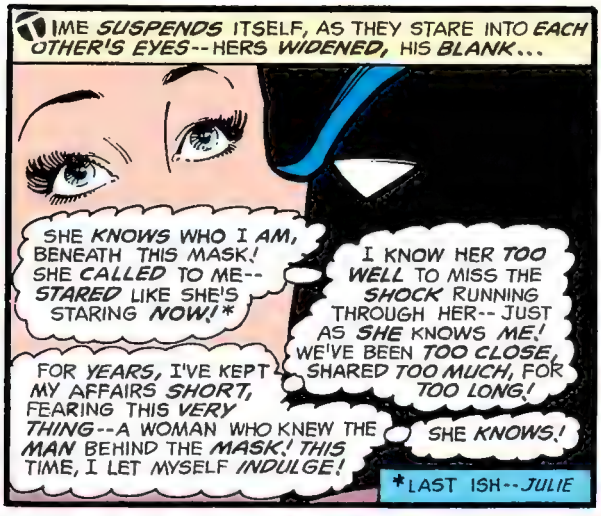


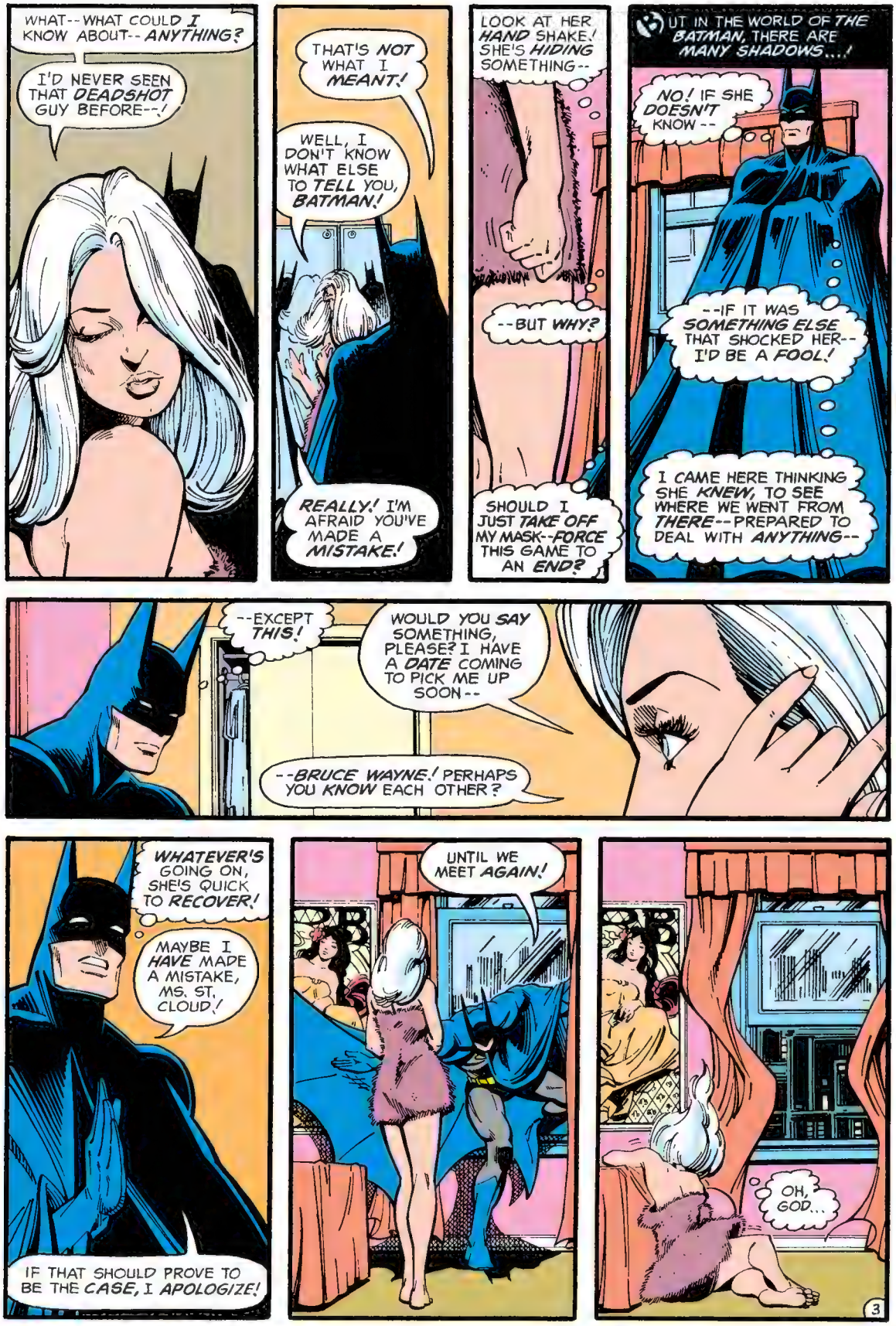
UNHEARD AND UNSEEN, *THE BATMAN* REMAINS *STILL* FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, *WEIGHING* IT ALL AGAIN IN HIS MIND...





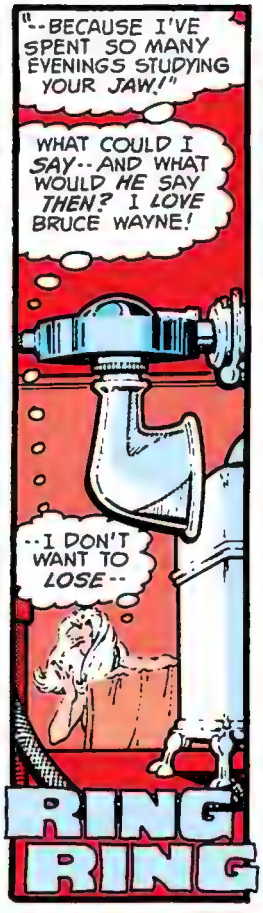
TIME *SUSPENDS* ITSELF, AS THEY STARE INTO *EACH OTHER'S EYES*--HERS *WIDENED*, HIS *BLANK*...




WHAT--WHAT COULD I KNOW ABOUT-- ANYTHING?
I'D NEVER SEEN THAT DEADSHOT GUY BEFORE--!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO TELL YOU, BATMAN!
REALLY! I'M AFRAID YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE!
LOOK AT HER HAND SHAKE! SHE'S HIDING SOMETHING--
--BUT WHY?
SHOULD I JUST TAKE OFF MY MASK--FORCE THIS GAME TO AN END?
UT IN THE WORLD OF THE BATMAN, THERE ARE MANY SHADOWS...!
NO! IF SHE DOESN'T KNOW --
--IF IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT SHOCKED HER-- I'D BE A FOOL!
I CAME HERE THINKING SHE KNEW, TO SEE WHERE WE WENT FROM THERE--PREPARED TO DEAL WITH ANYTHING--
--EXCEPT THIS!
WOULD YOU SAY SOMETHING, PLEASE? I HAVE A DATE COMING TO PICK ME UP SOON--
--BRUCE WAYNE! PERHAPS YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
WHATEVER'S GOING ON, SHE'S QUICK TO RECOVER!
MAYBE I HAVE MADE A MISTAKE, MS. ST. CLOUD!
IF THAT SHOULD PROVE TO BE THE CASE, I APOLOGIZE!
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!
OH, GOD...
3

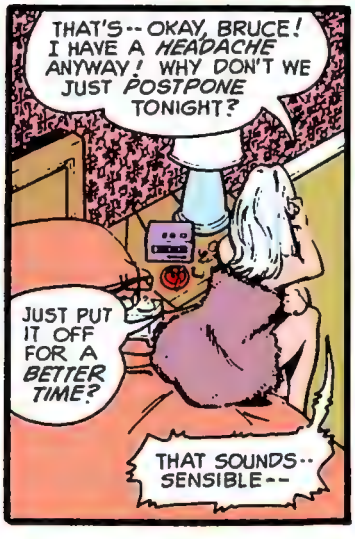
HE KNOWS!
BUT WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?
THAT WAS THE BATMAN!

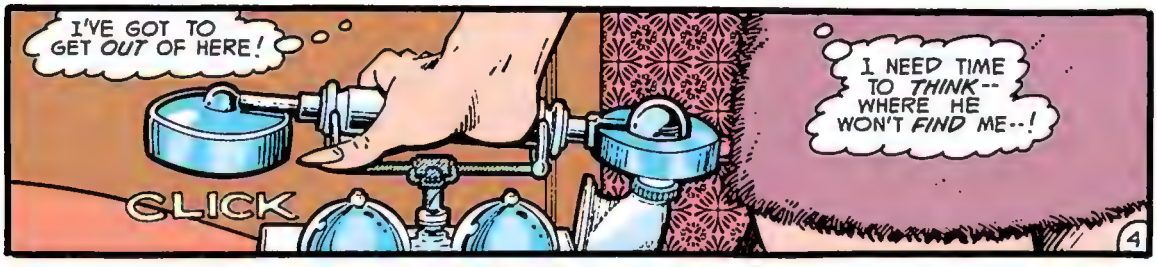
A LIVING LEGEND!
HE'S KEPT HIS TRUE IDENTITY SECRET FOR YEARS!
HOW COULD I LOOK IN THOSE PALE SLITS AND SAY, "I'VE FIGURED OUT YOUR SECRET!"? EVEN IF IT WERE TRUE--?
"YOU'RE REALLY MY BOY FRIEND, BATMAN! I CAN SEE WHAT OTHERS WOULD NEVER NOTICE--

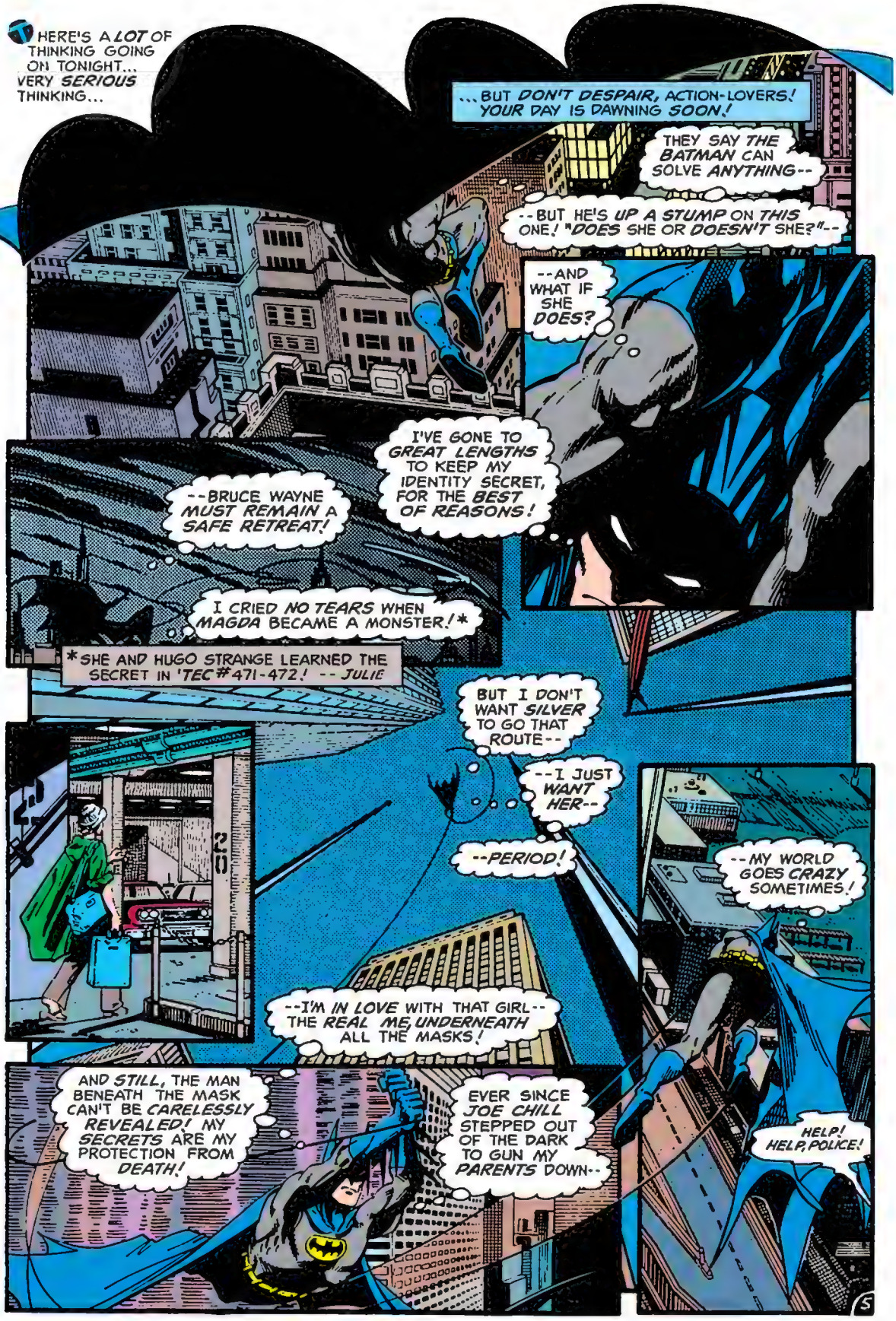

"--BECAUSE I'VE SPENT SO MANY EVENINGS STUDYING YOUR JAW!"
WHAT COULD I SAY--AND WHAT WOULD HE SAY THEN? I LOVE BRUCE WAYNE!
--I DON'T WANT TO LOSE--
RING RING

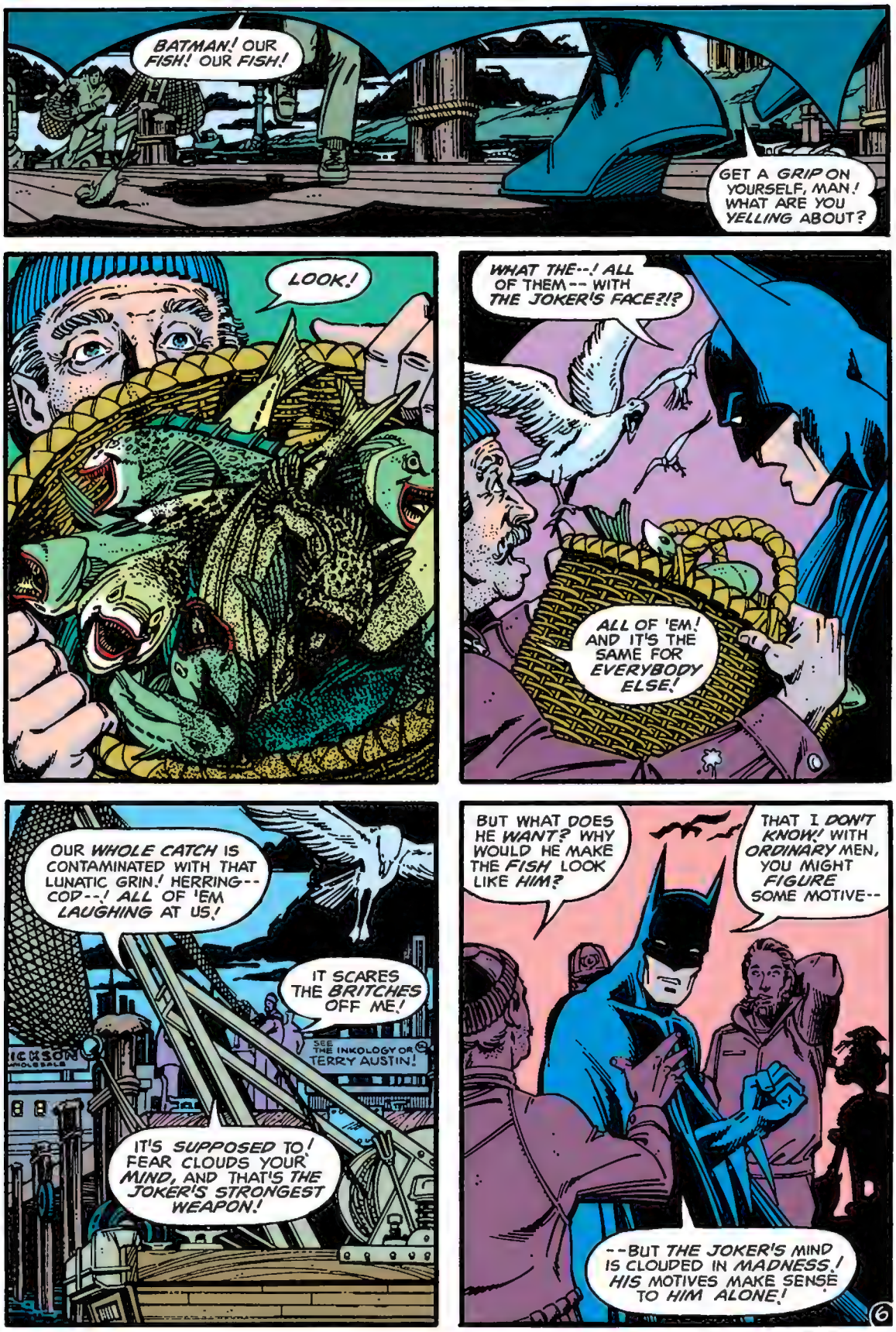
H-HELLO--
SILVER! THIS IS BRUCE--

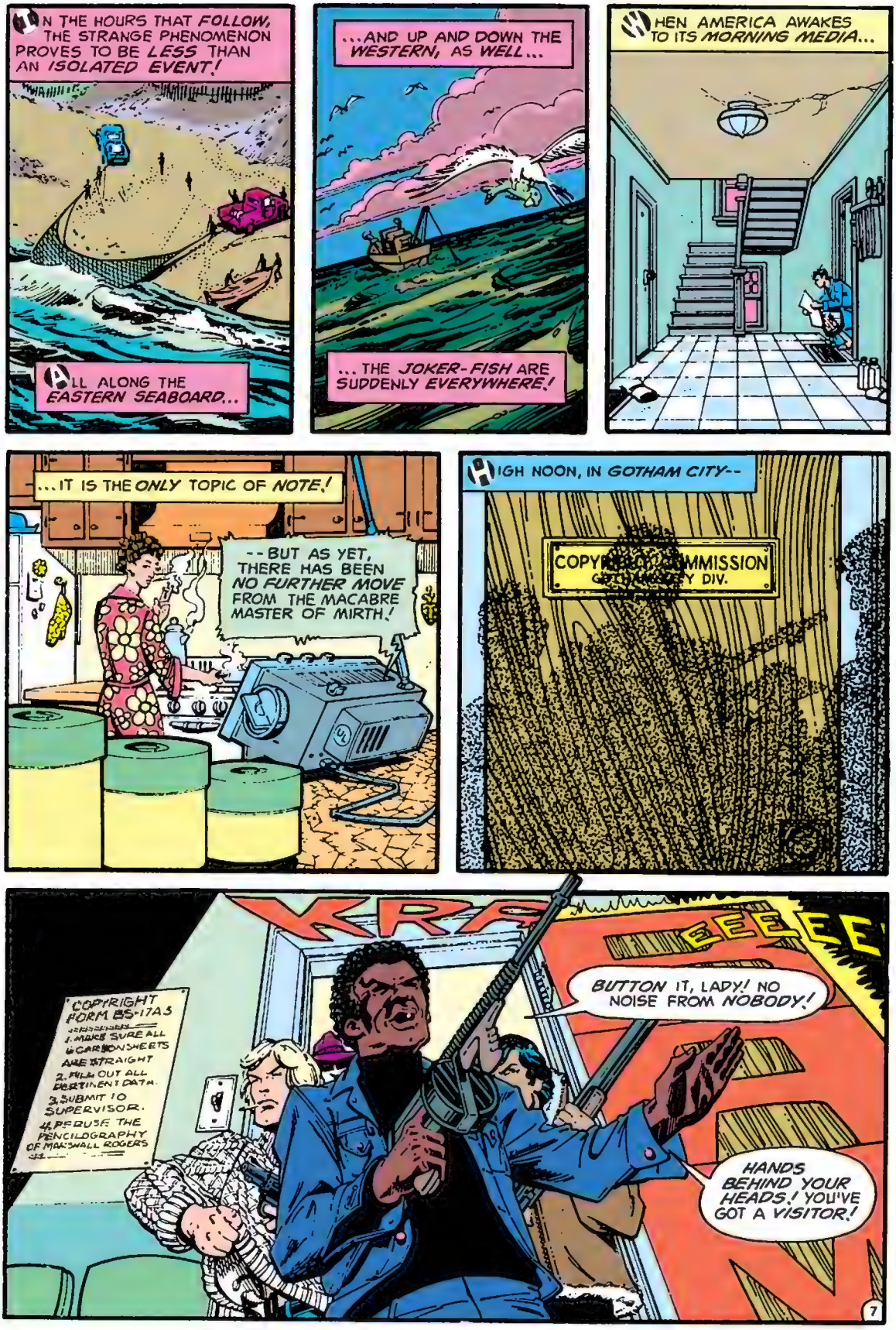
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW--I'LL BE A LITTLE LATE! I--HAVE TO WORK A FEW THINGS OUT YET--

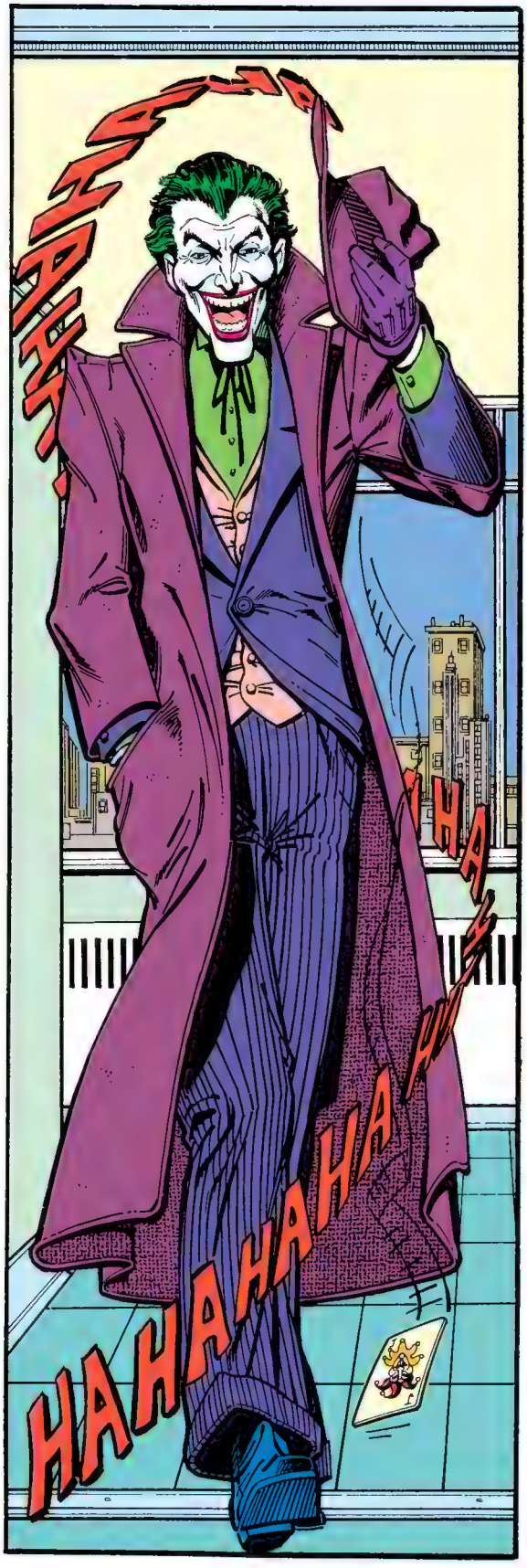

THAT'S--OKAY, BRUCE! I HAVE A HEADACHE ANYWAY! WHY DON'T WE JUST POSTPONE TONIGHT?
JUST PUT IT OFF FOR A BETTER TIME?
THAT SOUNDS--SENSIBLE--


I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
CLICK
I NEED TIME TO THINK--WHERE HE WON'T FIND ME--!


THERE'S A LOT OF THINKING GOING ON TONIGHT... VERY SERIOUS THINKING...
...BUT DON'T DESPAIR, ACTION-LOVERS! YOUR DAY IS DAWNING SOON!
THEY SAY THE BATMAN CAN SOLVE ANYTHING--
--BUT HE'S UP A STUMP ON THIS ONE! "DOES SHE OR DOESN'T SHE?"--
--AND WHAT IF SHE DOES?
I'VE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO KEEP MY IDENTITY SECRET, FOR THE BEST OF REASONS!
--BRUCE WAYNE MUST REMAIN A SAFE RETREAT!
I CRIED NO TEARS WHEN MAGDA BECAME A MONSTER!*
*SHE AND HUGO STRANGE LEARNED THE SECRET IN 'TEC #471-472! -- JULIE
BUT I DON'T WANT SILVER TO GO THAT ROUTE--
--I JUST WANT HER--
--PERIOD!
--MY WORLD GOES CRAZY SOMETIMES!
--I'M IN LOVE WITH THAT GIRL-- THE REAL ME, UNDERNEATH ALL THE MASKS!
AND STILL, THE MAN BENEATH THE MASK CAN'T BE CARELESSLY REVEALED! MY SECRETS ARE MY PROTECTION FROM DEATH!
EVER SINCE JOE CHILL STEPPED OUT OF THE DARK TO GUN MY PARENTS DOWN--
HELP! HELP, POLICE!


BATMAN! OUR FISH! OUR FISH!
GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, MAN! WHAT ARE YOU YELLING ABOUT?
LOOK!
WHAT THE--! ALL OF THEM -- WITH THE JOKER'S FACE?!?
ALL OF 'EM! AND IT'S THE SAME FOR EVERYBODY ELSE!
OUR WHOLE CATCH IS CONTAMINATED WITH THAT LUNATIC GRIN! HERRING--COD--! ALL OF 'EM LAUGHING AT US!
IT SCARES THE BRITCHES OFF ME!
SEE THE INKOLOGY OF TERRY AUSTIN!
IT'S SUPPOSED TO! FEAR CLOUDS YOUR MIND, AND THAT'S THE JOKER'S STRONGEST WEAPON!
BUT WHAT DOES HE WANT? WHY WOULD HE MAKE THE FISH LOOK LIKE HIM?
THAT I DON'T KNOW! WITH ORDINARY MEN, YOU MIGHT FIGURE SOME MOTIVE--
--BUT THE JOKER'S MIND IS CLOUDED IN MADNESS! HIS MOTIVES MAKE SENSE TO HIM ALONE!
6


IN THE HOURS THAT FOLLOW, THE STRANGE PHENOMENON PROVES TO BE LESS THAN AN ISOLATED EVENT!
ALL ALONG THE EASTERN SEABOARD...
...AND UP AND DOWN THE WESTERN, AS WELL...
...THE JOKER-FISH ARE SUDDENLY EVERYWHERE!
WHEN AMERICA AWAKES TO ITS MORNING MEDIA...
...IT IS THE ONLY TOPIC OF NOTE!
--BUT AS YET, THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER MOVE FROM THE MACABRE MASTER OF MIRTH!
HIGH NOON, IN GOTHAM CITY--
COPYRIGHT OFFICE
DIV.
COPYRIGHT FORM BS-17A3
1. MAKE SURE ALL 6 CARBON SHEETS ARE STRAIGHT
2. FILL OUT ALL PERTINENT DATA
3. SUBMIT TO SUPERVISOR.
4. PERUSE THE PENCILOGRAPHY OF MARSHALL ROGERS
BUTTON IT, LADY! NO NOISE FROM NOBODY!
HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEADS! YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR!

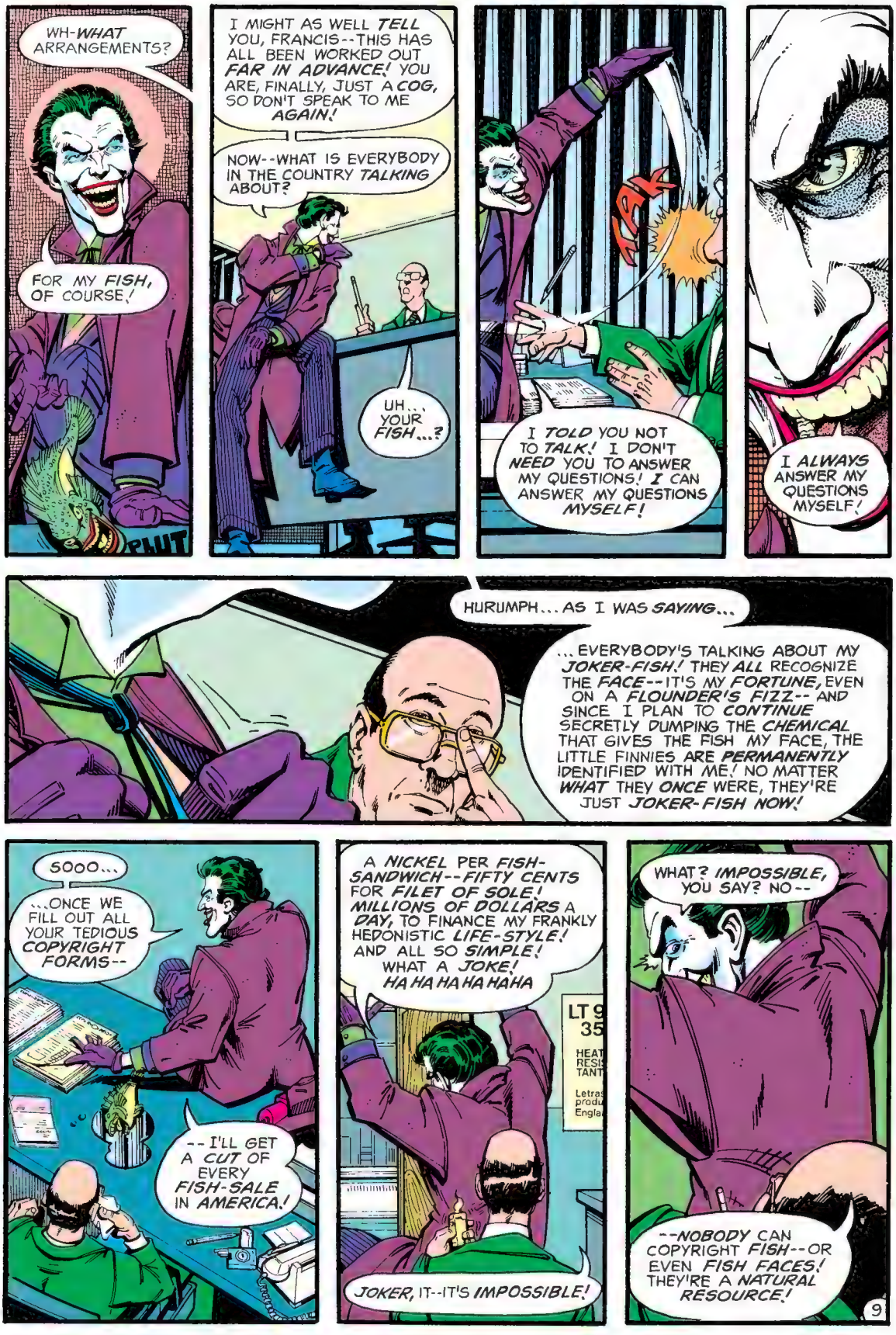

HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA
HA

GOOD LORD!

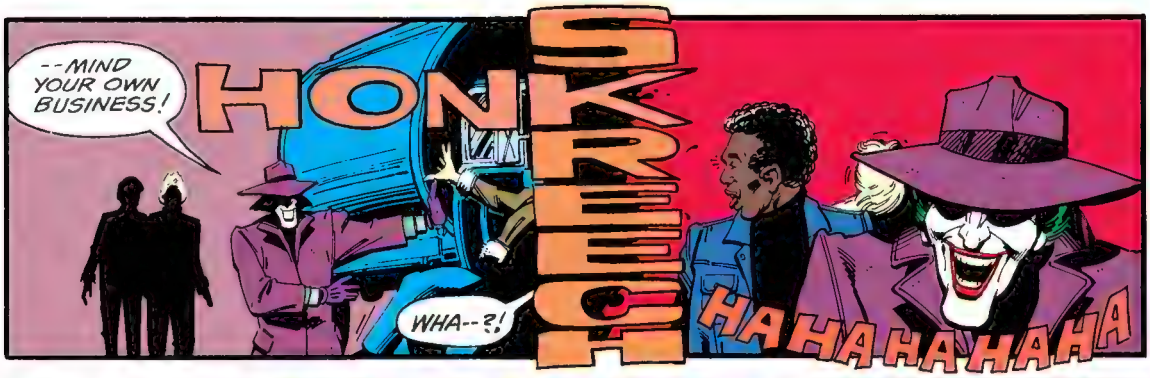
WHERE?

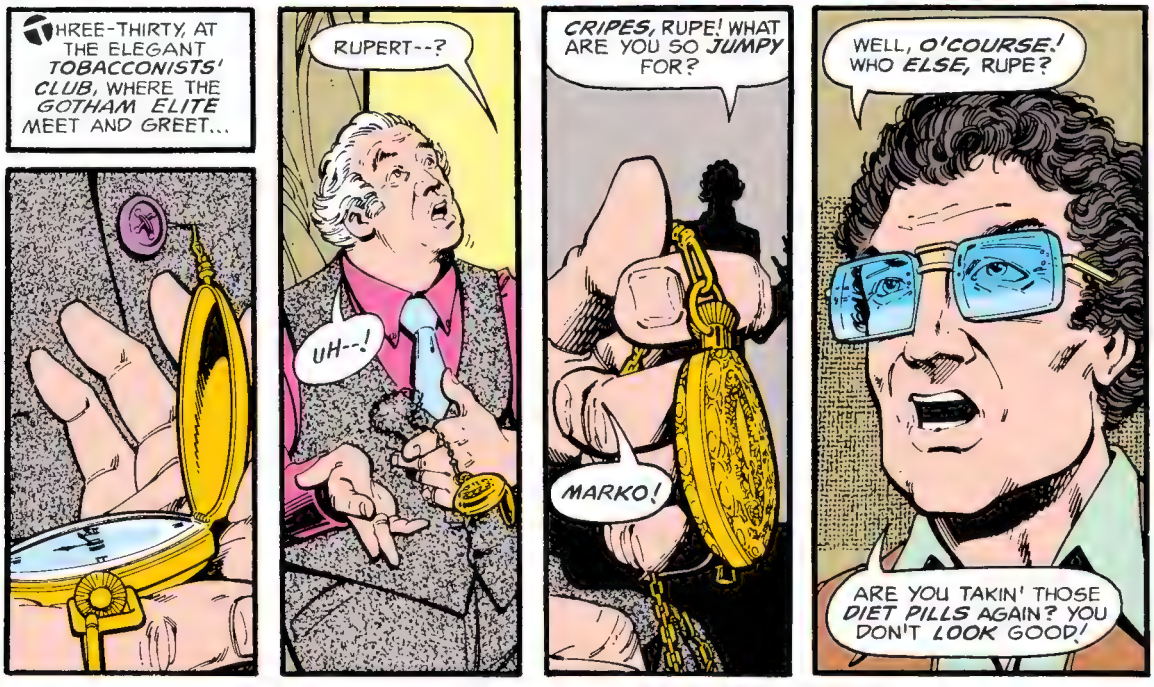
OH, HAHAHAHAA, I SEE! IT WAS JUST AN EXPRESSION--
--OF ENDEARMENT. EH, MR. FRANCIS? COME ON, YOU CAN TELL ME! YOU'VE ALWAYS SECRETLY ADMIRED ME, HAVEN'T YOU?
J-JOKER-- I--
NEVER MIND! WE'VE NO TIME FOR PLEASANTRIES, YOU AND I!

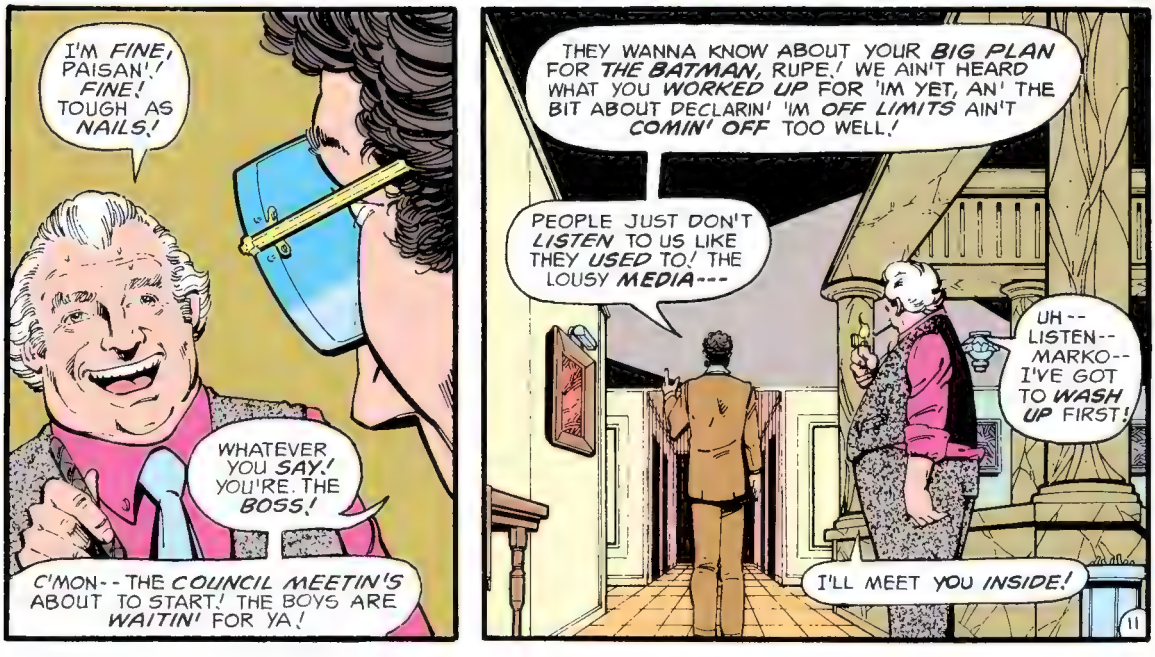
THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS! I'VE MADE CERTAIN THAT WE WON'T BE INTERRUPTED, SO THAT WE CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS LIKE MEN OF LEISURE!
8

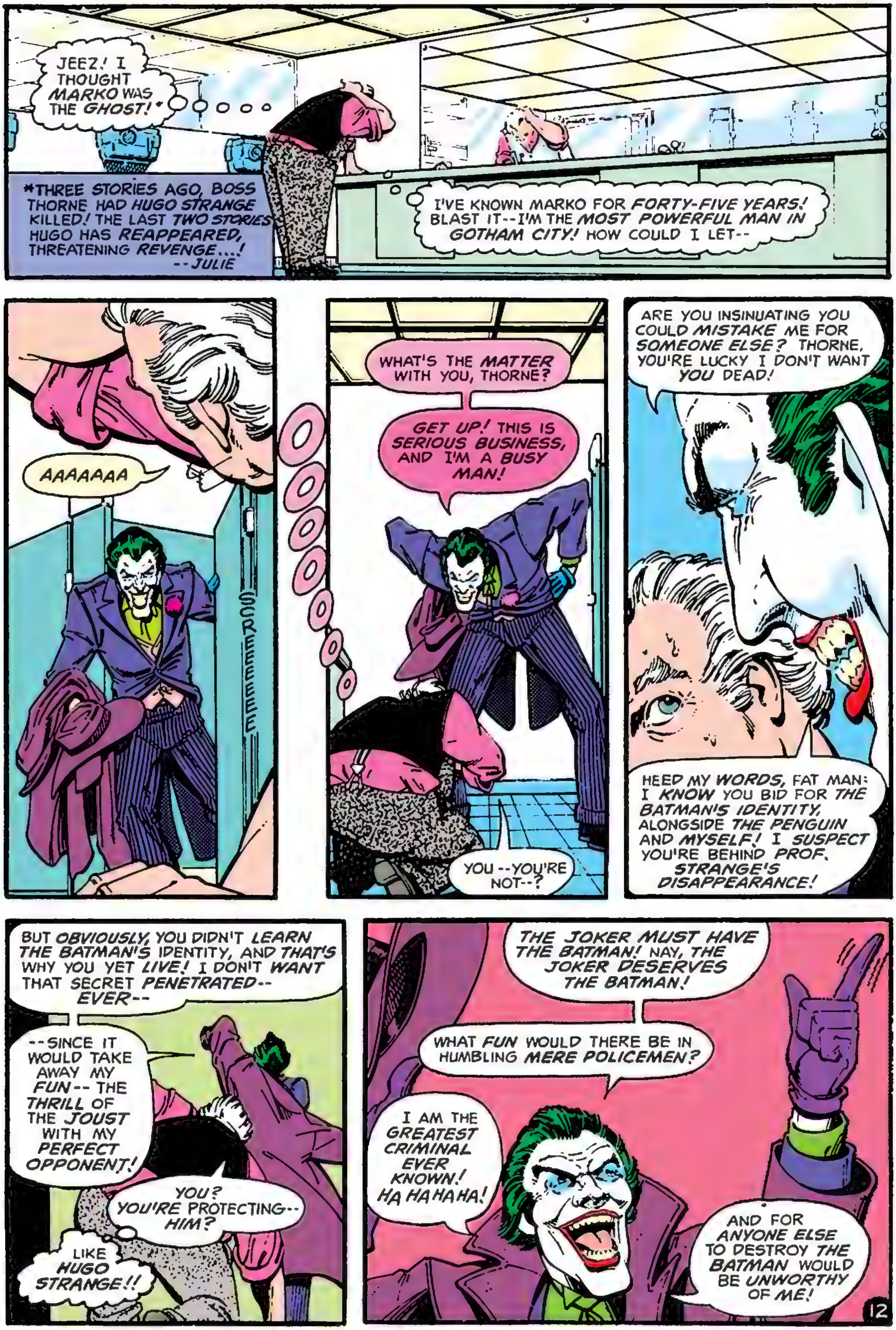

WH-WHAT ARRANGEMENTS?
FOR MY FISH, OF COURSE!
PHUT
I MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU, FRANCIS--THIS HAS ALL BEEN WORKED OUT FAR IN ADVANCE! YOU ARE, FINALLY, JUST A COG, SO DON'T SPEAK TO ME AGAIN!
NOW--WHAT IS EVERYBODY IN THE COUNTRY TALKING ABOUT?
UH... YOUR FISH...?
I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK! I DON'T NEED YOU TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS! I CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS MYSELF!
I ALWAYS ANSWER MY QUESTIONS MYSELF!
HURUMPH... AS I WAS SAYING...
...EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT MY JOKER-FISH! THEY ALL RECOGNIZE THE FACE--IT'S MY FORTUNE, EVEN ON A FLOUNDER'S FIZZ-- AND SINCE I PLAN TO CONTINUE SECRETLY DUMPING THE CHEMICAL THAT GIVES THE FISH MY FACE, THE LITTLE FINNIES ARE PERMANENTLY IDENTIFIED WITH ME! NO MATTER WHAT THEY ONCE WERE, THEY'RE JUST JOKER-FISH NOW!
SOOO...
...ONCE WE FILL OUT ALL YOUR TEDIOUS COPYRIGHT FORMS--
--I'LL GET A CUT OF EVERY FISH-SALE IN AMERICA!
A NICKEL PER FISH-SANDWICH--FIFTY CENTS FOR FILET OF SOLE! MILLIONS OF DOLLARS A DAY, TO FINANCE MY FRANKLY HEDONISTIC LIFE-STYLE! AND ALL SO SIMPLE! WHAT A JOKE! HA HA HA HA HAHA
JOKER, IT--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT? IMPOSSIBLE, YOU SAY? NO--
--NOBODY CAN COPYRIGHT FISH--OR EVEN FISH FACES! THEY'RE A NATURAL RESOURCE!
9

I WARN YOU, FRANCIS... DON'T CAUSE ME TO BECOME ANGRY!
I--I CAN'T HELP IT! IT'S THE LAW!
BUT THE FISH SHARE MY UNIQUE FACE! IF COLONEL WHAT'S-HIS-NAME CAN HAVE CHICKENS, WHEN THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE MUSTACHES--!
--AND YOU DENY THIS TO ME! YOU SEE WHY I AM FORCED TO CRIME!
YOU HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT TO CHANGE YOUR MIND, FRANCIS! IF YOU DON'T, YOU'LL BE THE POOREST FISH OF ALL--
--AND DEAD AS A MACKEREL!
HAHAHAHAHA
HE'S--HE'S INSANE!
HAHA!
OUTSIDE--
GET BACK TO YOUR DUMPING, BOYS-- AND ALERT THE OTHER CREWS! I HAVE JUST BEGUN TO FIGHT!
TRY TO CHEAT THE JOKER, WILL HE? WE'LL SEE WHO LAUGHS LAST!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, BOSS?
I? I HAVE ANOTHER MATTER TO ATTEND TO, BLUE-EYES!
AND BY THE WAY--
10


--MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
HONK
SKREECH
WHA--?!
HAHAHAHAHA

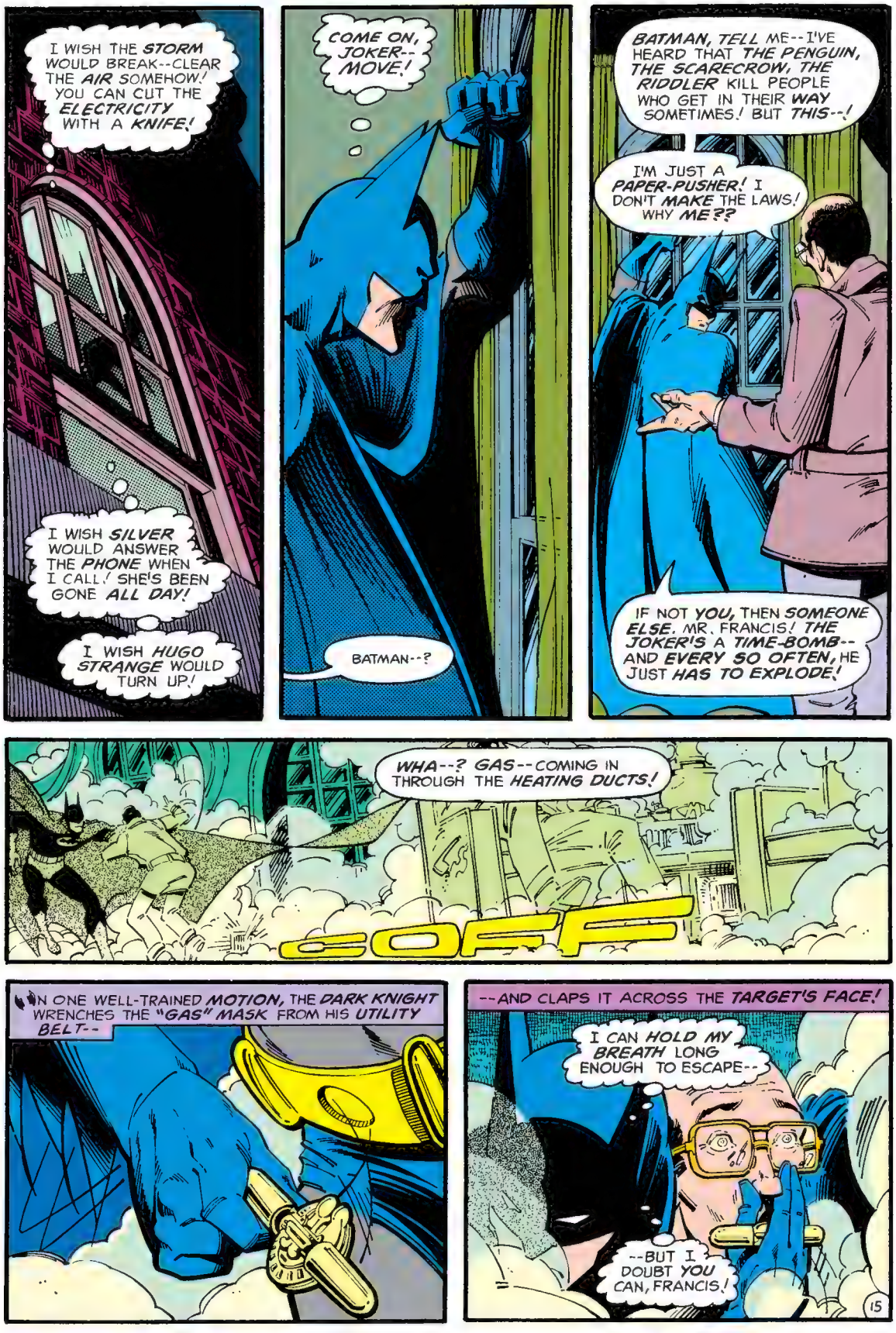

THREE-THIRTY, AT THE ELEGANT TOBACCONISTS' CLUB, WHERE THE GOTHAM ELITE MEET AND GREET...
RUPERT--?
UH--!
CRIPES, RUPE! WHAT ARE YOU SO JUMPY FOR?
MARKO!
WELL, O'COURSE! WHO ELSE, RUPE?
ARE YOU TAKIN' THOSE DIET PILLS AGAIN? YOU DON'T LOOK GOOD!

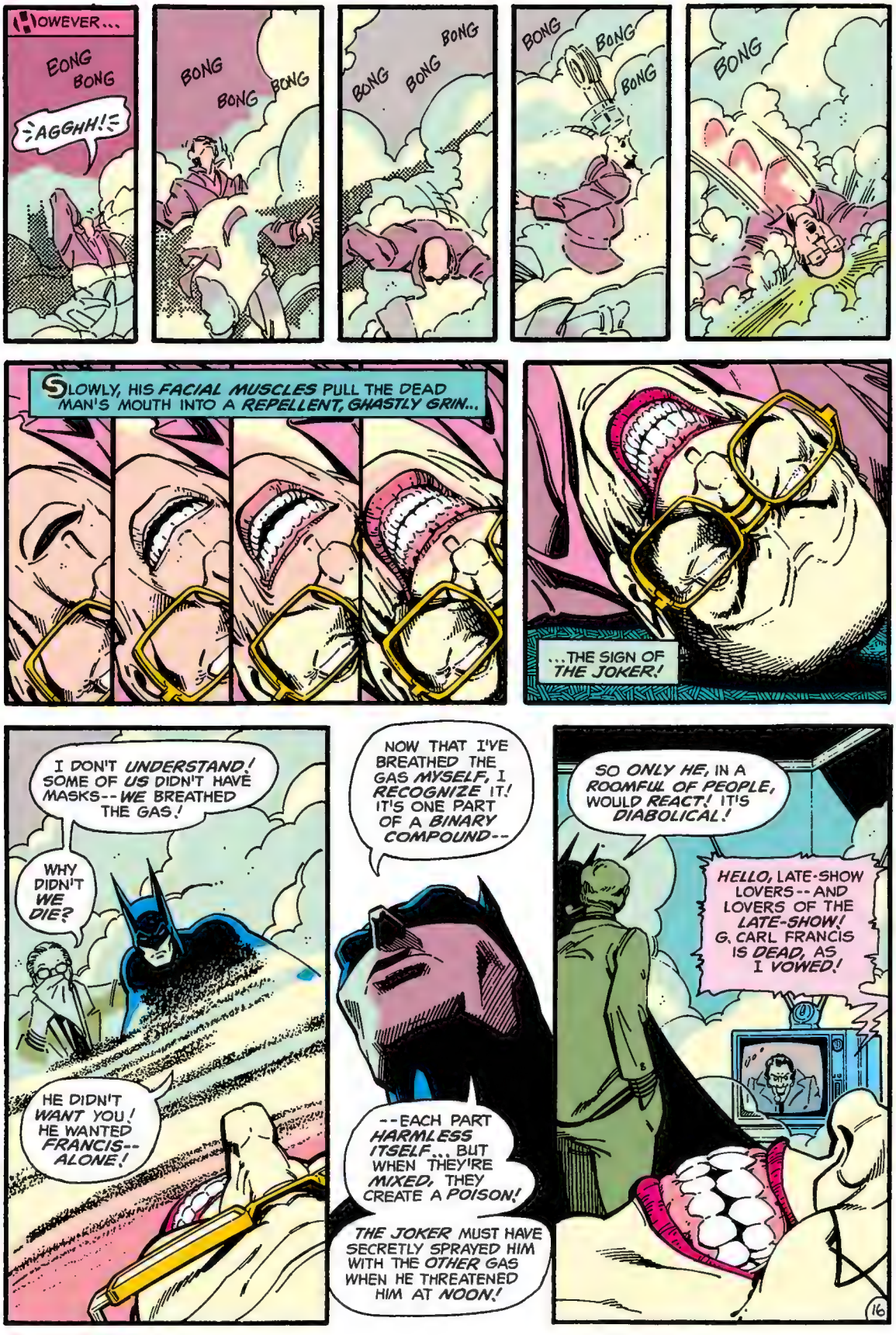

I'M FINE, PAISAN'! FINE! TOUGH AS NAILS!
WHATEVER YOU SAY! YOU'RE THE BOSS!
C'MON--THE COUNCIL MEETIN'S ABOUT TO START! THE BOYS ARE WAITIN' FOR YA!
THEY WANNA KNOW ABOUT YOUR BIG PLAN FOR THE BATMAN, RUPE! WE AIN'T HEARD WHAT YOU WORKED UP FOR 'IM YET, AN' THE BIT ABOUT DECLARIN' 'IM OFF LIMITS AIN'T COMIN' OFF TOO WELL!
PEOPLE JUST DON'T LISTEN TO US LIKE THEY USED TO! THE LOUSY MEDIA---
UH--LISTEN--MARKO--I'VE GOT TO WASH UP FIRST!
I'LL MEET YOU INSIDE!

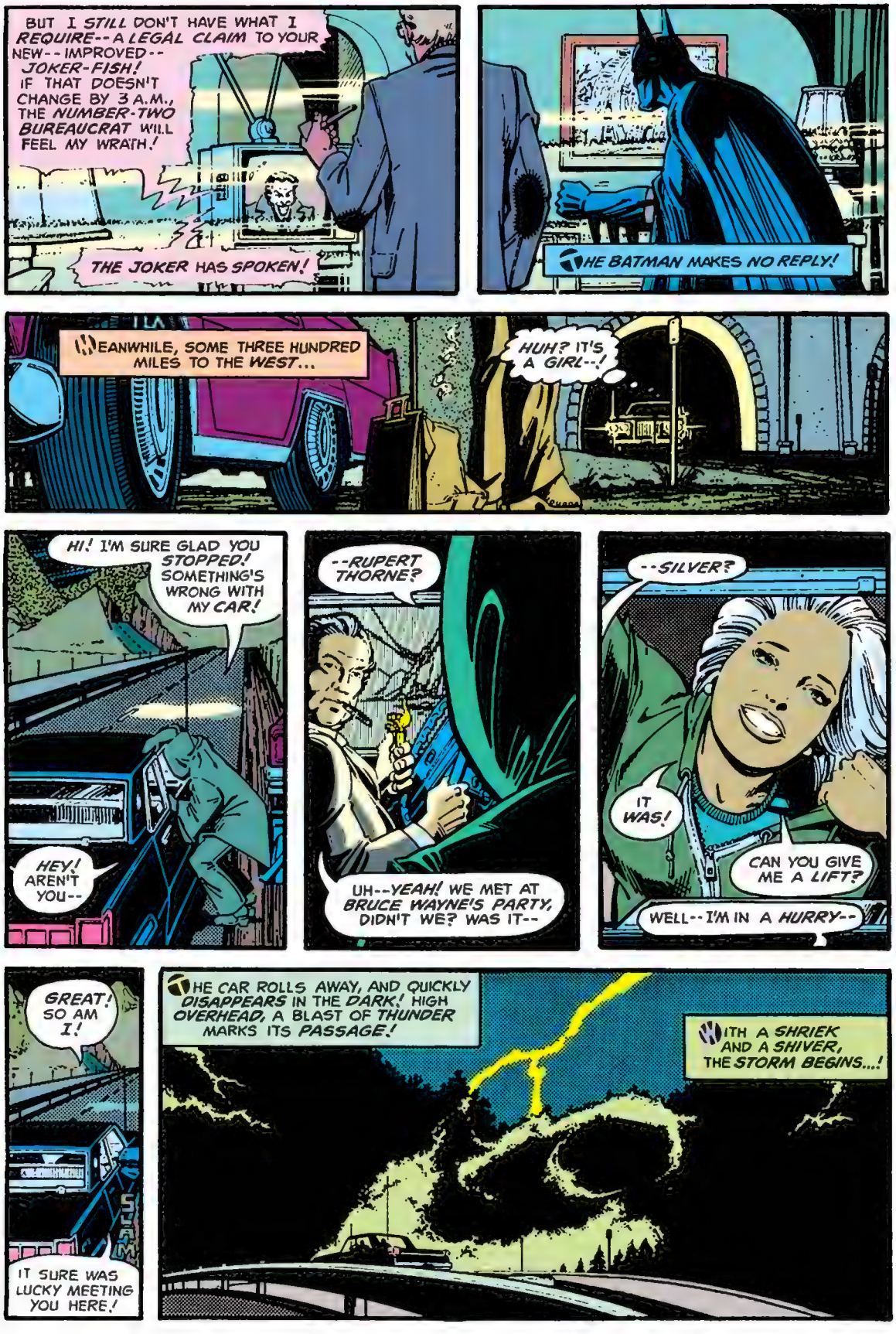

JEEZ! I THOUGHT MARKO WAS THE GHOST!*
*THREE STORIES AGO, BOSS THORNE HAD HUGO STRANGE KILLED! THE LAST TWO STORIES HUGO HAS REAPPEARED, THREATENING REVENGE...! --JULIE
I'VE KNOWN MARKO FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS! BLAST IT--I'M THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN GOTHAM CITY! HOW COULD I LET--
AAAAAAA
SCREEEEE
OOOOOOOO
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, THORNE?
GET UP! THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS, AND I'M A BUSY MAN!
YOU --YOU'RE NOT--?
ARE YOU INSINUATING YOU COULD MISTAKE ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE? THORNE, YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T WANT YOU DEAD!
HEED MY WORDS, FAT MAN: I KNOW YOU BID FOR THE BATMAN'S IDENTITY, ALONGSIDE THE PENGUIN AND MYSELF! I SUSPECT YOU'RE BEHIND PROF. STRANGE'S DISAPPEARANCE!
BUT OBVIOUSLY, YOU DIDN'T LEARN THE BATMAN'S IDENTITY, AND THAT'S WHY YOU YET LIVE! I DON'T WANT THAT SECRET PENETRATED-- EVER--
--SINCE IT WOULD TAKE AWAY MY FUN-- THE THRILL OF THE JOUST WITH MY PERFECT OPPONENT!
YOU? YOU'RE PROTECTING-- HIM?
LIKE HUGO STRANGE!!
THE JOKER MUST HAVE THE BATMAN! NAY, THE JOKER DESERVES THE BATMAN!
WHAT FUN WOULD THERE BE IN HUMBLING MERE POLICEMEN?
I AM THE GREATEST CRIMINAL EVER KNOWN! HA HA HA HA!
AND FOR ANYONE ELSE TO DESTROY THE BATMAN WOULD BE UNWORTHY OF ME!
12

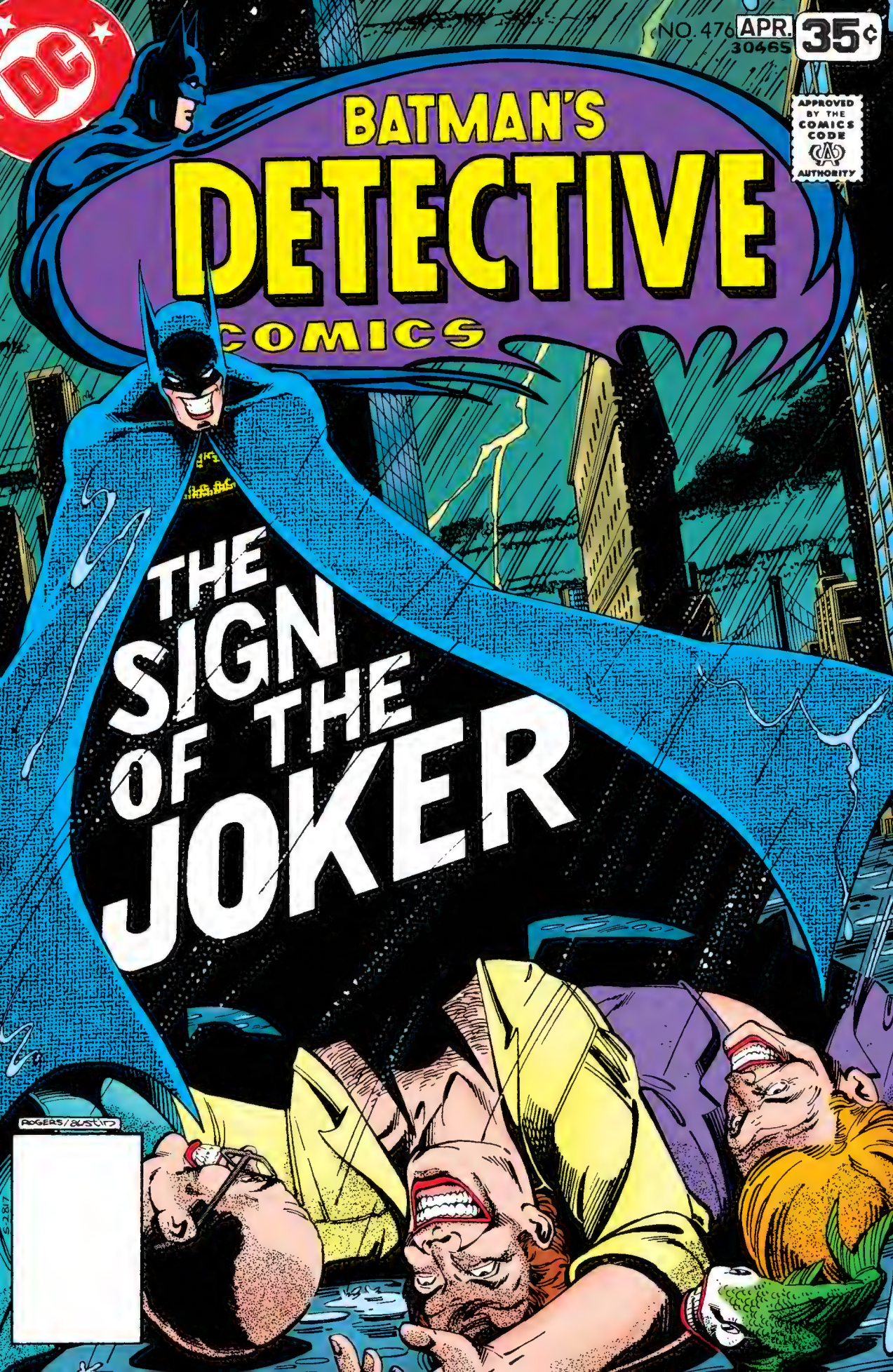
SO STOP TRYING, THORNE! IF HUGO STRANGE'S KNOWLEDGE DIED WITH HIM, IT WAS YOUR LUCKY DAY! THE MATTER IS CLOSED!
BUT--BUT WHAT IF STRANGE DIDN'T DIE--? NOT--COMPLETELY--? AH HA!
HAHAHAHA
SAY--!
HAAHA HA AHAHAHA
RUPE--?
BOSS?
MOVE, STARK! I'M DRIVING MYSELF!
I'M GETTING AWAY!
SURE, BOSS--BUT WHAT--?
SERGEANT STARK'S WORDS ARE BLOTTED OUT IN THE SCREAM OF TIRES! RUPERT THORNE IS GONE, OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING--
SKREEEEEE
--INCLUDING--THE BAT-SIGNAL!
PTOWN, AT THE HOME OF G. CARL FRANCIS...
BATMAN! THANK GOD YOU CAME!

WHEN YOU LIGHT THAT BEACON, COMMISSIONER--
--I'LL COME! THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN, AND THE WAY IT'LL ALWAYS BE!
BUT WON'T THIS GET YOU IN DUTCH AT CITY HALL?
LET THEM WRITE ME A REPRIMAND!
I'VE GOT A PROBLEM YOU'LL WANT TO SOLVE!
THIS MAN--
HAHAHAHA! WE INTERRUPT OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED RERUNS TO BRING YOU THE FOLLOWING FIRESIDE CHAT!
GOOD EVENING, MY FELLOW AMERICANS! TONIGHT, AT PRECISELY TWELVE O'CLOCK, I WILL KILL G. CARL FRANCIS!
THE JOKER HAS SPOKEN!
LET'S GET TO WORK, COMMISSIONER!
THE MINUTES DRAG INTO THE EVENING, PILING UP INTO HOURS OF PAINS-TAKING PREPARATIONS! THE BATMAN TAKES TOTAL CHARGE--AND THE POLICE ACCEPT HIM ABSOLUTELY, AS ONE OF THEM!
TICK TOCK TICK
TICK TOCK
BUT SOME OF THEM HAVE TRIED TO BLOCK THE JOKER AT OTHER TIMES, AND KNOW THE RANGE OF HIS MAD GENIUS!
THE MOOD IS MORE THAN GRIM!
11:55! FRANCIS IS CORDONED OFF HERE, AND THE HOUSE IS SURROUNDED OUTSIDE! HE'S EATEN NOTHING SINCE THE THREAT--ALL WATER'S BROUGHT IN FROM THE POLICE LAB--!
WHAT HAVEN'T I COVERED?
14


I WISH THE STORM WOULD BREAK--CLEAR THE AIR SOMEHOW! YOU CAN CUT THE ELECTRICITY WITH A KNIFE!
I WISH SILVER WOULD ANSWER THE PHONE WHEN I CALL! SHE'S BEEN GONE ALL DAY!
I WISH HUGO STRANGE WOULD TURN UP!
COME ON, JOKER-- MOVE!
BATMAN--?
BATMAN, TELL ME--I'VE HEARD THAT THE PENGUIN, THE SCARECROW, THE RIDDLER KILL PEOPLE WHO GET IN THEIR WAY SOMETIMES! BUT THIS--!
I'M JUST A PAPER-PUSHER! I DON'T MAKE THE LAWS! WHY ME??
IF NOT YOU, THEN SOMEONE ELSE, MR. FRANCIS! THE JOKER'S A TIME-BOMB-- AND EVERY SO OFTEN, HE JUST HAS TO EXPLODE!
WHA--? GAS--COMING IN THROUGH THE HEATING DUCTS!
POOF
IN ONE WELL-TRAINED MOTION, THE DARK KNIGHT WRENCHES THE "GAS" MASK FROM HIS UTILITY BELT--
--AND CLAPS IT ACROSS THE TARGET'S FACE!
I CAN HOLD MY BREATH LONG ENOUGH TO ESCAPE--
--BUT I DOUBT YOU CAN, FRANCIS!


HOWEVER...
EONG
BONG
AGGHH!
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
SLOWLY, HIS FACIAL MUSCLES PULL THE DEAD MAN'S MOUTH INTO A REPELLENT, GHASTLY GRIN...
...THE SIGN OF THE JOKER!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! SOME OF US DIDN'T HAVE MASKS--WE BREATHED THE GAS!
WHY DIDN'T WE DIE?
HE DIDN'T WANT YOU! HE WANTED FRANCIS--ALONE!
NOW THAT I'VE BREATHED THE GAS MYSELF, I RECOGNIZE IT! IT'S ONE PART OF A BINARY COMPOUND--
--EACH PART HARMLESS ITSELF... BUT WHEN THEY'RE MIXED, THEY CREATE A POISON!
THE JOKER MUST HAVE SECRETLY SPRAYED HIM WITH THE OTHER GAS WHEN HE THREATENED HIM AT NOON!
SO ONLY HE, IN A ROOMFUL OF PEOPLE, WOULD REACT! IT'S DIABOLICAL!
HELLO, LATE-SHOW LOVERS--AND LOVERS OF THE LATE-SHOW! G. CARL FRANCIS IS DEAD, AS I VOWED!
16


BUT I STILL DON'T HAVE WHAT I REQUIRE--A LEGAL CLAIM TO YOUR NEW--IMPROVED--JOKER-FISH! IF THAT DOESN'T CHANGE BY 3 A.M., THE NUMBER-TWO BUREAUCRAT WILL FEEL MY WRATH!
THE JOKER HAS SPOKEN!
THE BATMAN MAKES NO REPLY!
MEANWHILE, SOME THREE HUNDRED MILES TO THE WEST...
HUH? IT'S A GIRL--!
HI! I'M SURE GLAD YOU STOPPED! SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH MY CAR!
HEY! AREN'T YOU--
--RUPERT THORNE?
UH--YEAH! WE MET AT BRUCE WAYNE'S PARTY, DIDN'T WE? WAS IT--
--SILVER?
IT WAS!
CAN YOU GIVE ME A LIFT?
WELL--I'M IN A HURRY--
GREAT! SO AM I!
SLAM
IT SURE WAS LUCKY MEETING YOU HERE!
THE CAR ROLLS AWAY, AND QUICKLY DISAPPEARS IN THE DARK! HIGH OVERHEAD, A BLAST OF THUNDER MARKS ITS PASSAGE!
WITH A SHRIEK AND A SHIVER, THE STORM BEGINS...!


DC
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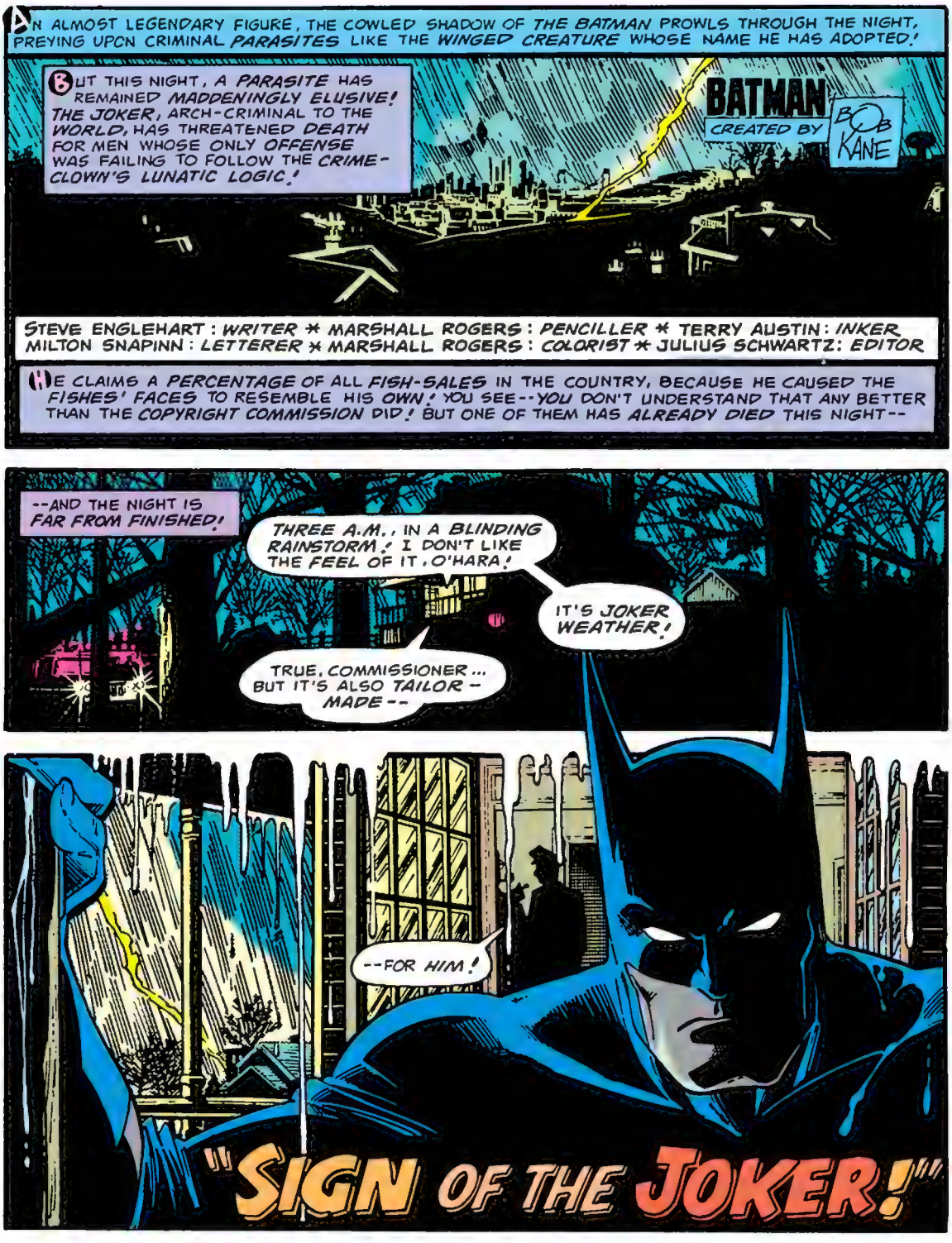
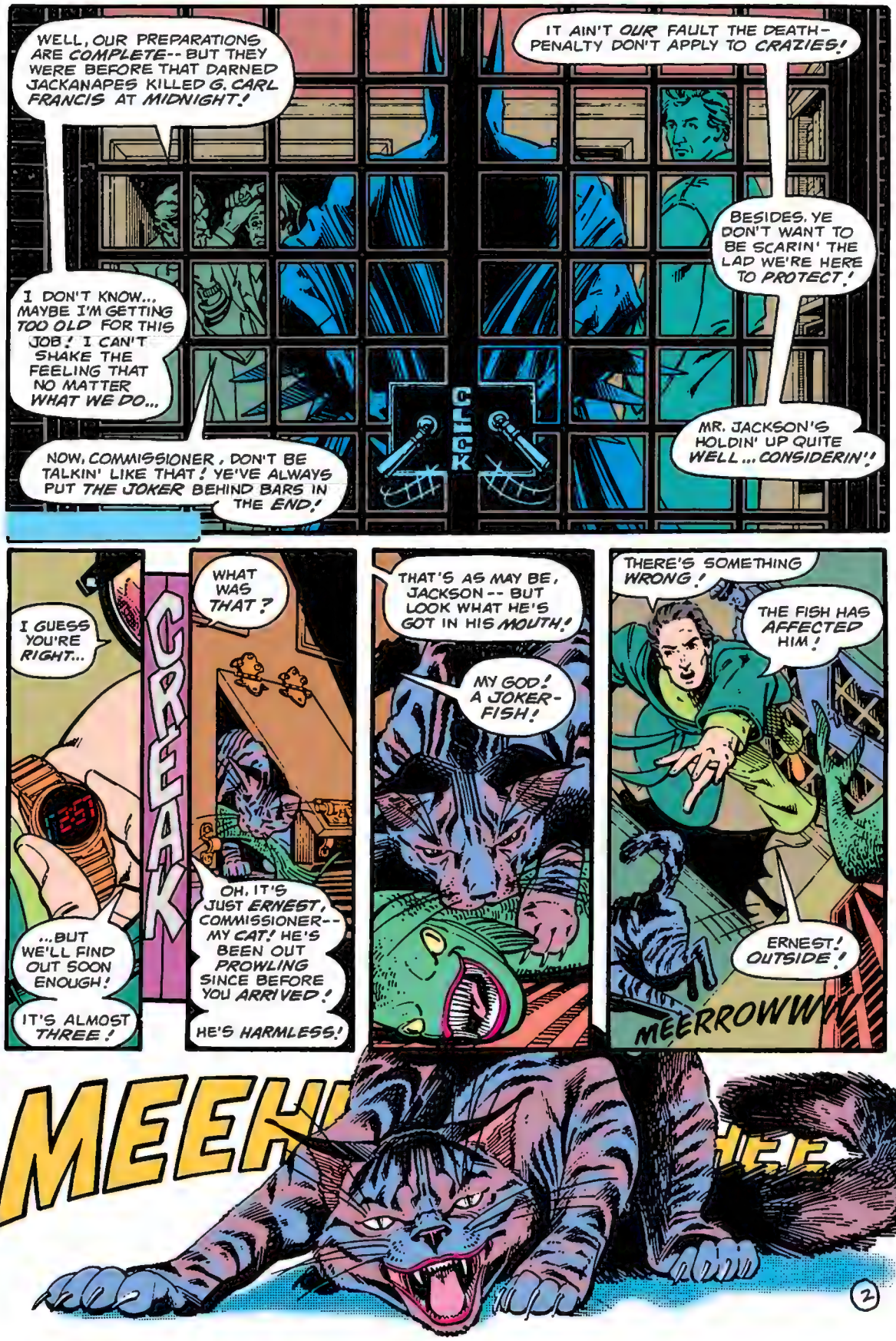
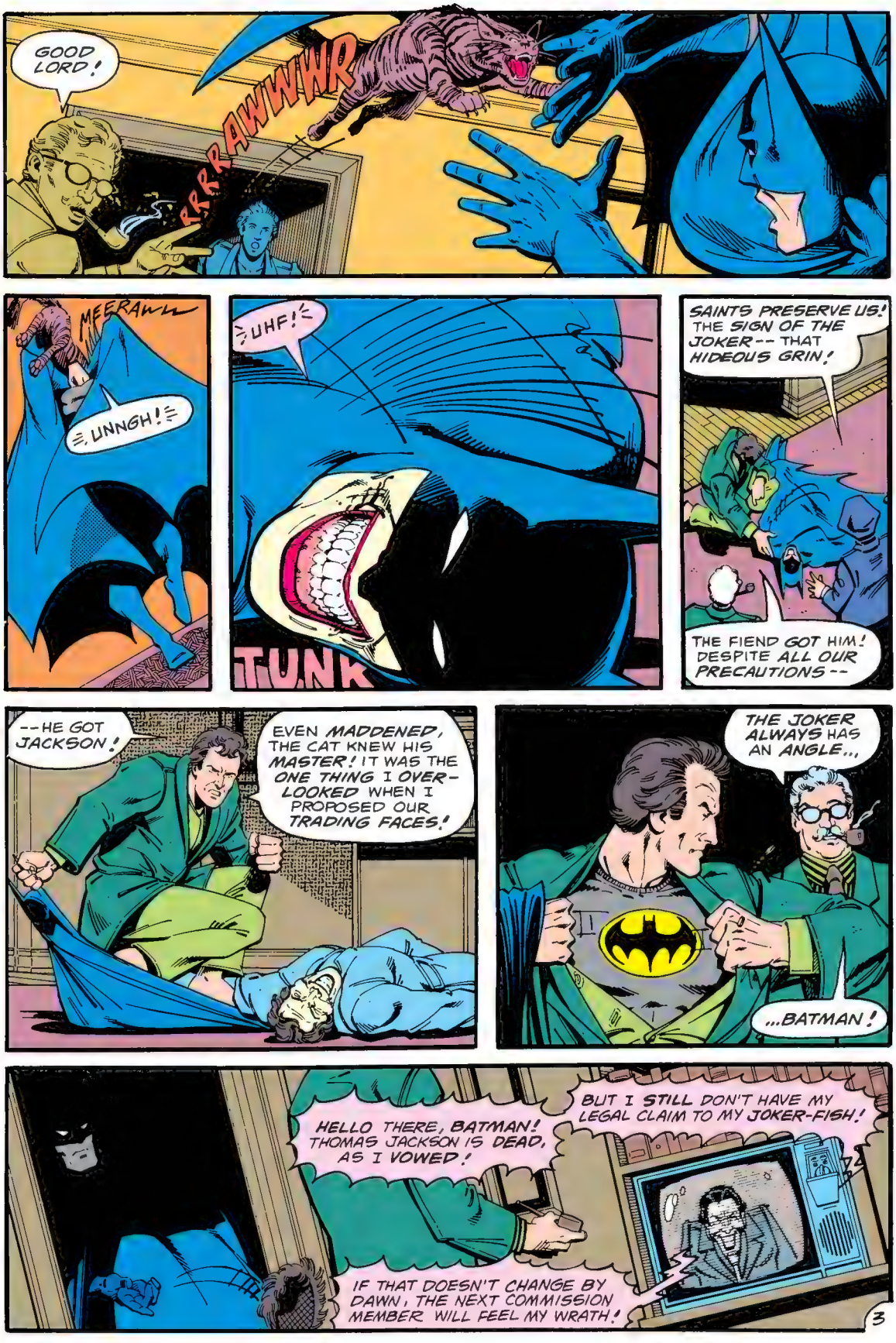
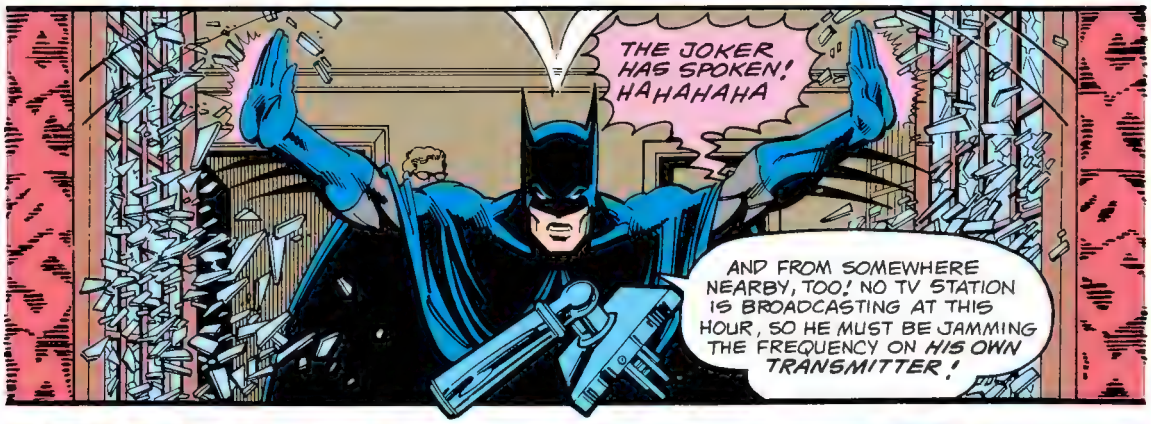
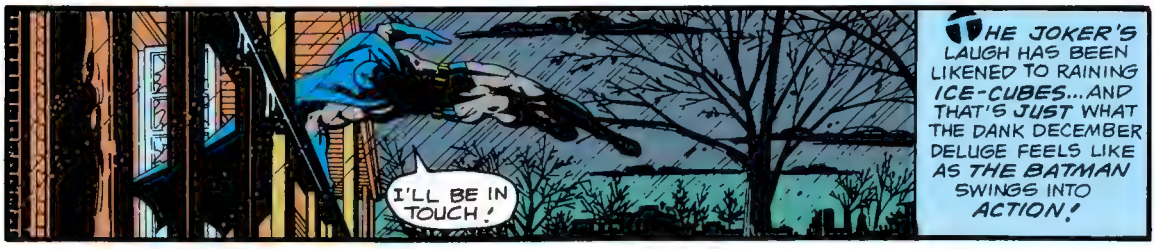
35¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BATMAN'S
DETECTIVE
COMICS
THE SIGN OF THE JOKER
ROGERS/AUSTIN

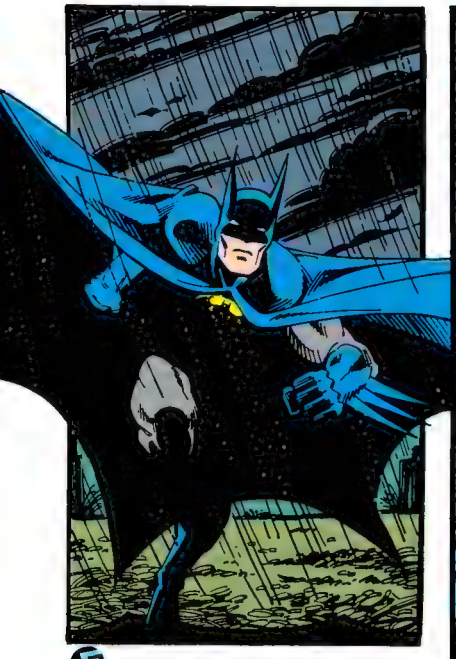

AN ALMOST LEGENDARY FIGURE, THE COWLED SHADOW OF THE BATMAN PROWLS THROUGH THE NIGHT, PREYING UPON CRIMINAL PARASITES LIKE THE WINGED CREATURE WHOSE NAME HE HAS ADOPTED!
BUT THIS NIGHT, A PARASITE HAS REMAINED MADDENINGLY ELUSIVE! THE JOKER, ARCH-CRIMINAL TO THE WORLD, HAS THREATENED DEATH FOR MEN WHOSE ONLY OFFENSE WAS FAILING TO FOLLOW THE CRIME-CLOWN'S LUNATIC LOGIC!
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
STEVE ENGLEHART : WRITER * MARSHALL ROGERS : PENCILLER * TERRY AUSTIN : INKER
MILTON SNAPINN : LETTERER * MARSHALL ROGERS : COLORIST * JULIUS SCHWARTZ: EDITOR
HE CLAIMS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL FISH-SALES IN THE COUNTRY, BECAUSE HE CAUSED THE FISHES' FACES TO RESEMBLE HIS OWN! YOU SEE--YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT ANY BETTER THAN THE COPYRIGHT COMMISSION DID! BUT ONE OF THEM HAS ALREADY DIED THIS NIGHT--
--AND THE NIGHT IS FAR FROM FINISHED!
THREE A.M., IN A BLINDING RAINSTORM! I DON'T LIKE THE FEEL OF IT, O'HARA!
IT'S JOKER WEATHER!
TRUE, COMMISSIONER... BUT IT'S ALSO TAILOR-MADE--
--FOR HIM!
"SIGN OF THE JOKER!"


WELL, OUR PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE-- BUT THEY WERE BEFORE THAT DARNED JACKANAPES KILLED G. CARL FRANCIS AT MIDNIGHT!
IT AIN'T OUR FAULT THE DEATH-PENALTY DON'T APPLY TO CRAZIES!
BESIDES, YE DON'T WANT TO BE SCARIN' THE LAD WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT!
I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS JOB! I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT NO MATTER WHAT WE DO...
CLICK
MR. JACKSON'S HOLDIN' UP QUITE WELL... CONSIDERIN'!
NOW, COMMISSIONER, DON'T BE TALKIN' LIKE THAT! YE'VE ALWAYS PUT THE JOKER BEHIND BARS IN THE END!
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
CREAK
WHAT WAS THAT?
...BUT WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH!
IT'S ALMOST THREE!
OH, IT'S JUST ERNEST, COMMISSIONER-- MY CAT! HE'S BEEN OUT PROWLING SINCE BEFORE YOU ARRIVED!
HE'S HARMLESS!
THAT'S AS MAY BE, JACKSON -- BUT LOOK WHAT HE'S GOT IN HIS MOUTH!
MY GOD! A JOKER-FISH!
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG!
THE FISH HAS AFFECTED HIM!
ERNEST! OUTSIDE!
MEERROWW!
MEEH


GOOD LORD!
RRRRAWWWR
MEERAWL
UNNGH!
UHF!
TUNK
SAINTS PRESERVE US! THE SIGN OF THE JOKER -- THAT HIDEOUS GRIN!
THE FIEND GOT HIM! DESPITE ALL OUR PRECAUTIONS --
--HE GOT JACKSON!
EVEN MADDENED, THE CAT KNEW HIS MASTER! IT WAS THE ONE THING I OVER-LOOKED WHEN I PROPOSED OUR TRADING FACES!
THE JOKER ALWAYS HAS AN ANGLE...
...BATMAN!
HELLO THERE, BATMAN! THOMAS JACKSON IS DEAD, AS I VOWED!
BUT I STILL DON'T HAVE MY LEGAL CLAIM TO MY JOKER-FISH!
IF THAT DOESN'T CHANGE BY DAWN, THE NEXT COMMISSION MEMBER WILL FEEL MY WRATH!


THE JOKER HAS SPOKEN! HAHAHAHA
AND FROM SOMEWHERE NEARBY, TOO! NO TV STATION IS BROADCASTING AT THIS HOUR, SO HE MUST BE JAMMING THE FREQUENCY ON HIS OWN TRANSMITTER!

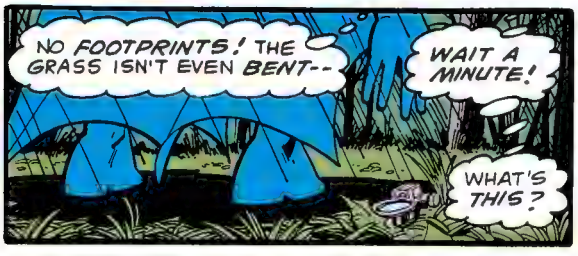

I'LL BE IN TOUCH!
THE JOKER'S LAUGH HAS BEEN LIKENED TO RAINING ICE-CUBES...AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THE DANK DECEMBER DELUGE FEELS LIKE AS THE BATMAN SWINGS INTO ACTION!

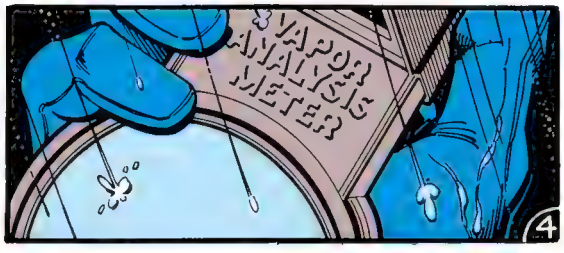

FREED, NOW, OF HIS BINDING DISGUISE, HIS BLOOD SINGING IN HIS VEINS, THE BATMAN RETURNS TO HIS ELEMENT!

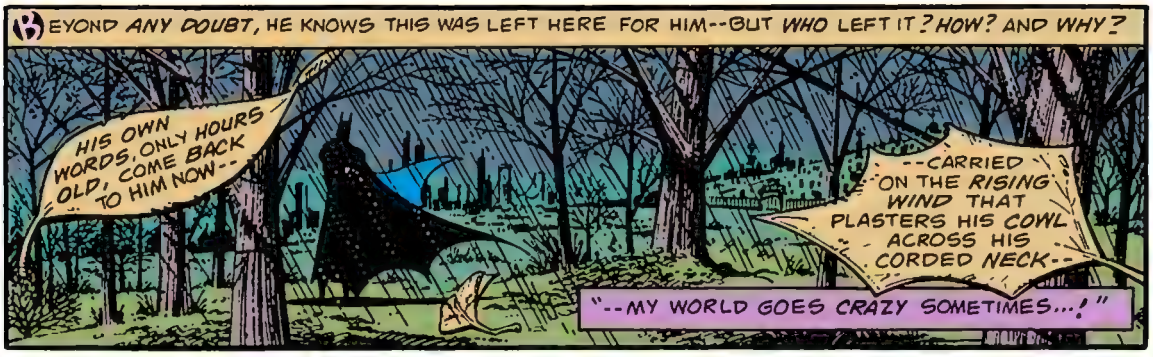
AND THEN--
EH? THAT SHIMMERING FORM--!
IT LOOKS LIKE--

--HUGO STRANGE!

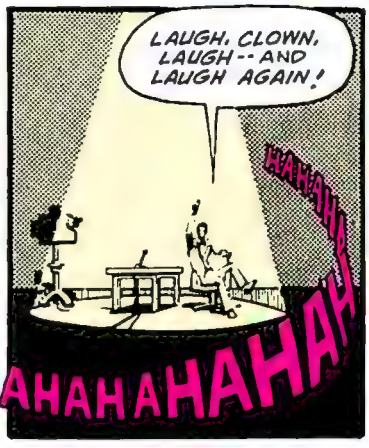
BUT WHEN SIX POUNDING STRIDES CARRY HIM INTO THE WOODS--
GONE!
OR--WAS HE EVER HERE? HE'S BEEN MISSING SO LONG, I WAS ALMOST SURE HE'D BOUGHT IT!*
*AND INDEED, STRANGE IS DEAD-- BUT HIS MURDER AT RUPERT THORNE'S ORDERS HAS SO FAR ESCAPED DETECTION!
-- JULIE


NO FOOTPRINTS! THE GRASS ISN'T EVEN BENT--
WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT'S THIS?


VAPOR ANALYSIS METER


BEYOND ANY DOUBT, HE KNOWS THIS WAS LEFT HERE FOR HIM--BUT WHO LEFT IT? HOW? AND WHY?
HIS OWN WORDS, ONLY HOURS OLD, COME BACK TO HIM NOW--
--CARRIED ON THE RISING WIND THAT PLASTERS HIS COWL ACROSS HIS CORDED NECK--
"--MY WORLD GOES CRAZY SOMETIMES...!"

AND IN ANOTHER PART OF THAT WORLD... IN THE CRIME CLOWN'S NEW HA-HACIENDA...

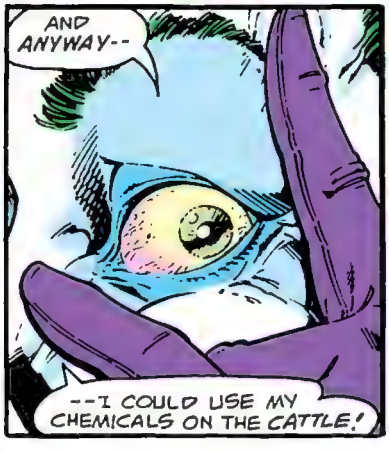

LAUGH, CLOWN, LAUGH--AND LAUGH AGAIN!
HAHAHA!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH

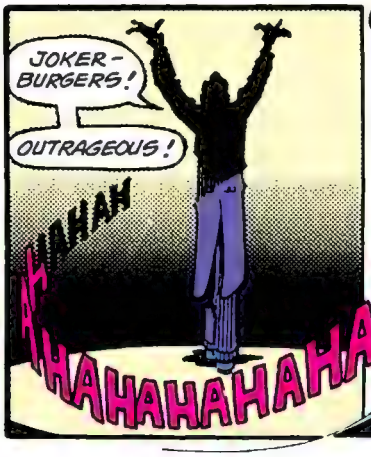
THE POLICE ARE COMPLETELY AT BAY! THE BATMAN IS BAYING AT THE MOON! NO ONE CAN BEAT THE JOKER!
SOON, NOW--SOON, THEY'LL SEE IT MY WAY! THEY'LL KNOW I MEAN WHAT I SAY! TODAY THE AMERICAN FISH--
--AND TOMORROW, ALL THE FISH IN THE WORLD!

BUT--WHAT IF EVERYBODY STOPS EATING FISH? I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT!

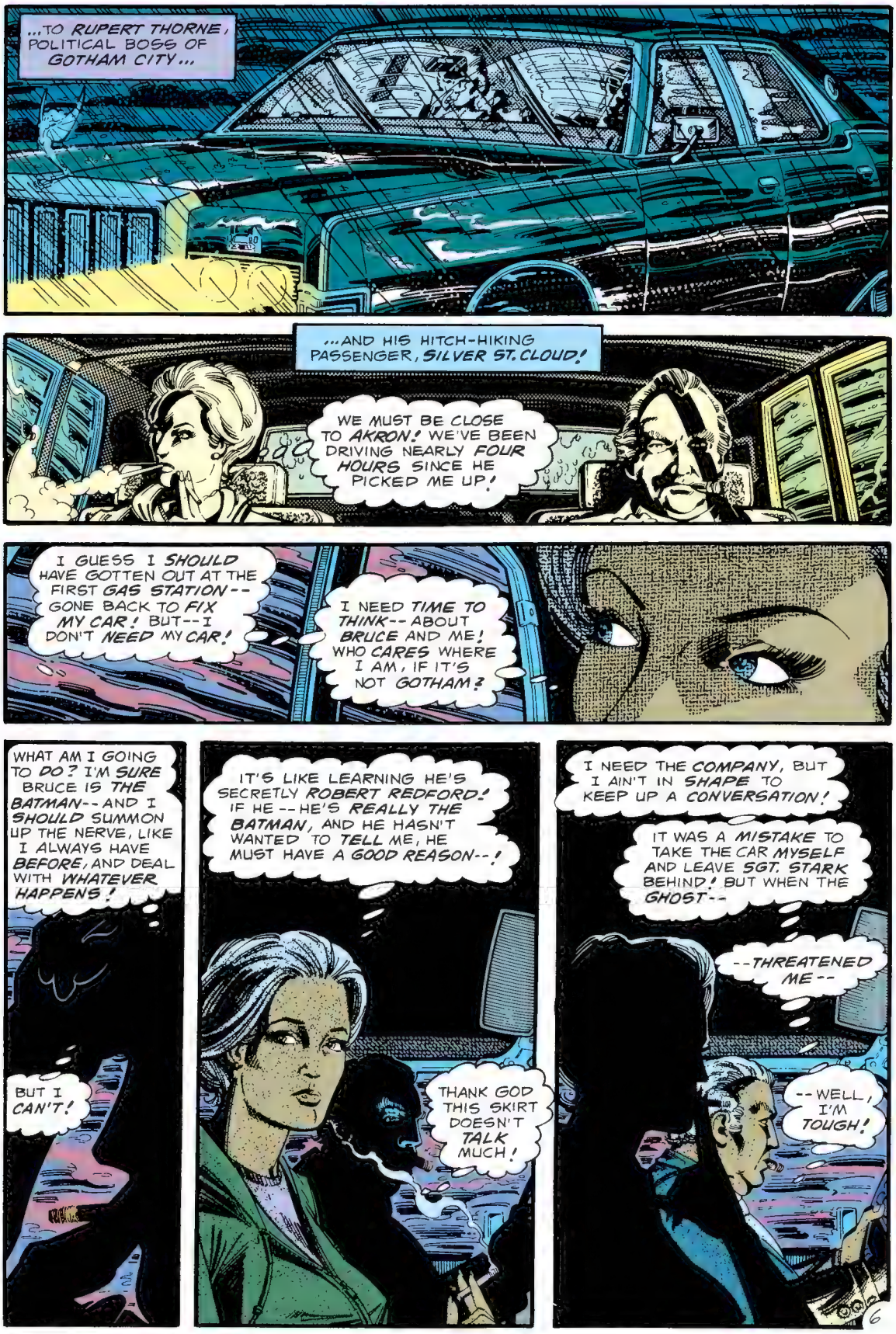
WHAT IF THEY ALL CONSPIRE AGAINST ME--
--LEAVE MY JOKER-FISH IN THE SEA?

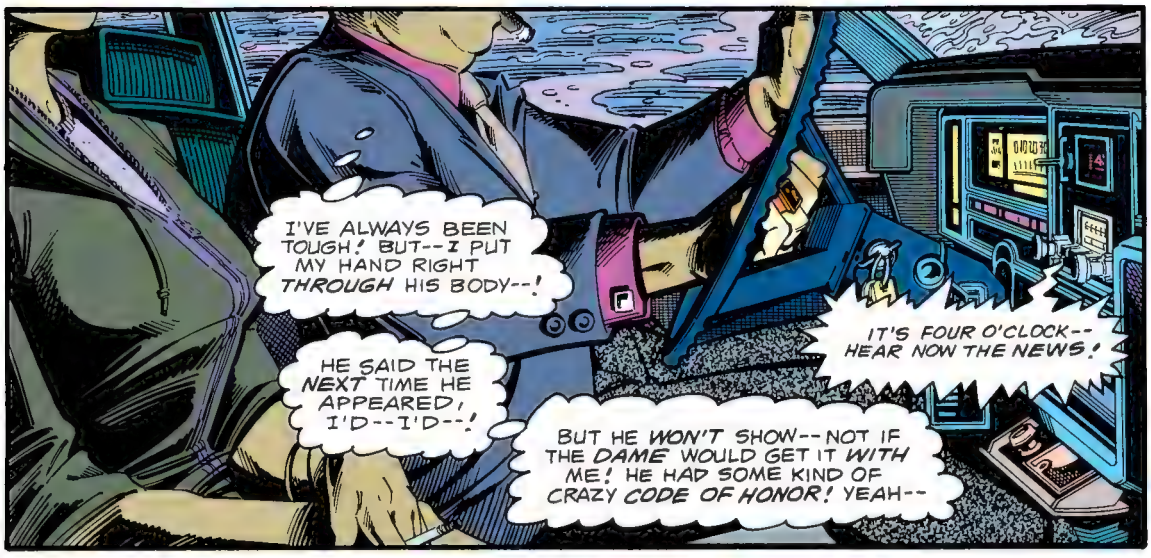
BUT NO--THAT WOULD NEVER WORK!
THE VEGETARIANS WOULDN'T GO ALONG!

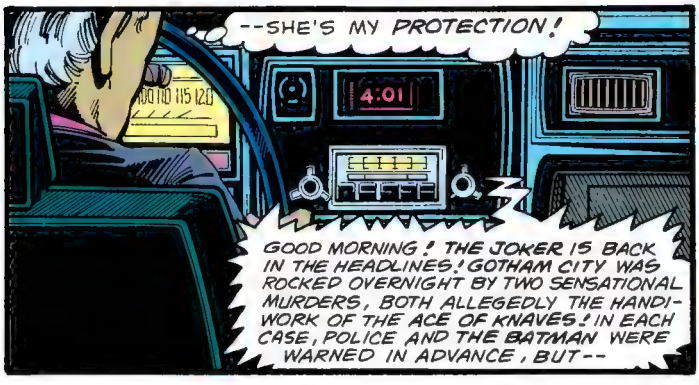

AND ANYWAY--
--I COULD USE MY CHEMICALS ON THE CATTLE!

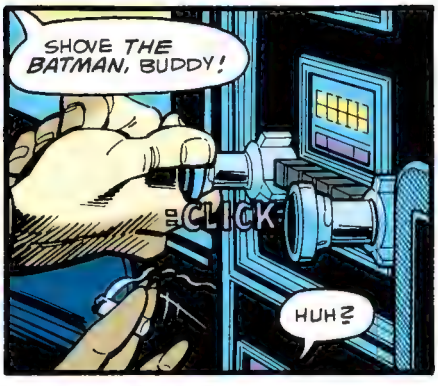

JOKER-BURGERS!
OUTRAGEOUS!
AHAHAH
AHAHAHAHAHAHA

A MAN THAT MAD IS WORTH MORE SPACE... BUT WE HAVE OTHER MEN TO MEET BEFORE DAWN!
SO IT IS THAT WE TURN...


...TO RUPERT THORNE, POLITICAL BOSS OF GOTHAM CITY...
...AND HIS HITCH-HIKING PASSENGER, SILVER ST. CLOUD!
WE MUST BE CLOSE TO AKRON! WE'VE BEEN DRIVING NEARLY FOUR HOURS SINCE HE PICKED ME UP!
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT AT THE FIRST GAS STATION -- GONE BACK TO FIX MY CAR! BUT -- I DON'T NEED MY CAR!
I NEED TIME TO THINK -- ABOUT BRUCE AND ME! WHO CARES WHERE I AM, IF IT'S NOT GOTHAM?
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I'M SURE BRUCE IS THE BATMAN -- AND I SHOULD SUMMON UP THE NERVE, LIKE I ALWAYS HAVE BEFORE, AND DEAL WITH WHATEVER HAPPENS!
BUT I CAN'T!
IT'S LIKE LEARNING HE'S SECRETLY ROBERT REDFORD! IF HE -- HE'S REALLY THE BATMAN, AND HE HASN'T WANTED TO TELL ME, HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REASON -- !
THANK GOD THIS SKIRT DOESN'T TALK MUCH!
I NEED THE COMPANY, BUT I AIN'T IN SHAPE TO KEEP UP A CONVERSATION!
IT WAS A MISTAKE TO TAKE THE CAR MYSELF AND LEAVE SGT. STARK BEHIND! BUT WHEN THE GHOST --
--THREATENED ME --
-- WELL, I'M TOUGH!


I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOUGH! BUT--I PUT MY HAND RIGHT THROUGH HIS BODY--!
HE SAID THE NEXT TIME HE APPEARED, I'D--I'D--!
IT'S FOUR O'CLOCK--HEAR NOW THE NEWS!
BUT HE WON'T SHOW--NOT IF THE DAME WOULD GET IT WITH ME! HE HAD SOME KIND OF CRAZY CODE OF HONOR! YEAH--

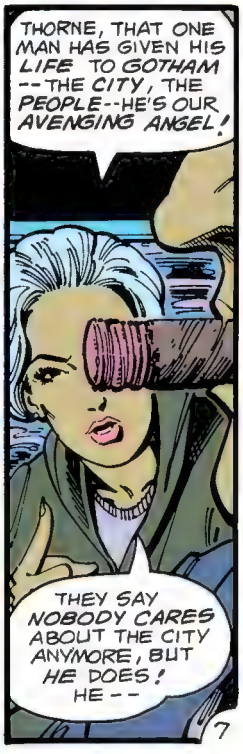

--SHE'S MY PROTECTION!
4:01
GOOD MORNING! THE JOKER IS BACK IN THE HEADLINES! GOTHAM CITY WAS ROCKED OVERNIGHT BY TWO SENSATIONAL MURDERS, BOTH ALLEGEDLY THE HANDIWORK OF THE ACE OF KNAVES! IN EACH CASE, POLICE AND THE BATMAN WERE WARNED IN ADVANCE, BUT--

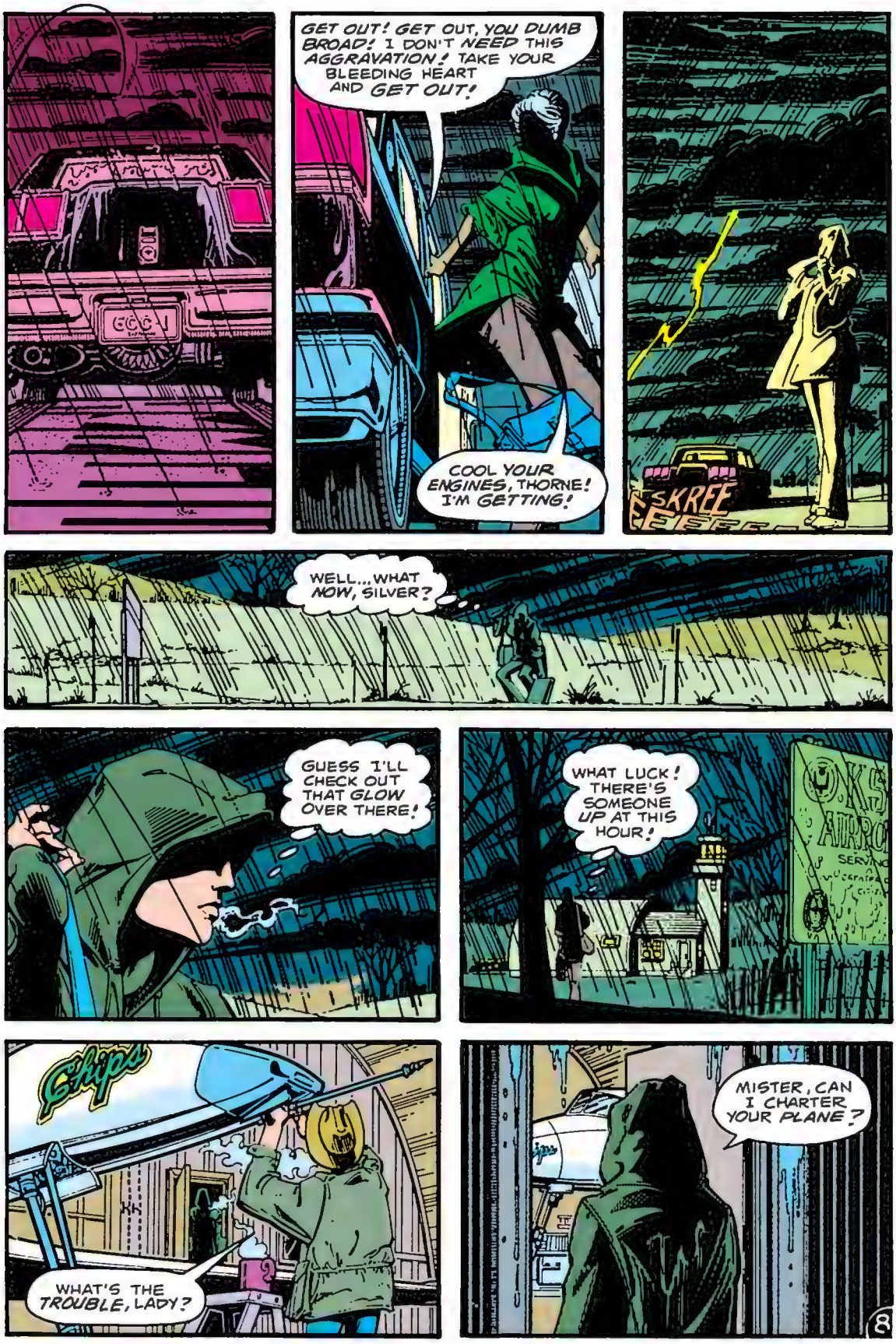

SHOVE THE BATMAN, BUDDY!
CLICK
HUH?

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, YOUNG LADY! (HARUMPH!...) AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOTHAM CITY COUNCIL, I DARE SAY YOUR TOWN WOULD BE A LOT BETTER OFF WITHOUT THE BATMAN!
THAT ONE MAN IS THE CAUSE OF ALL THE CITY'S PROBLEMS!

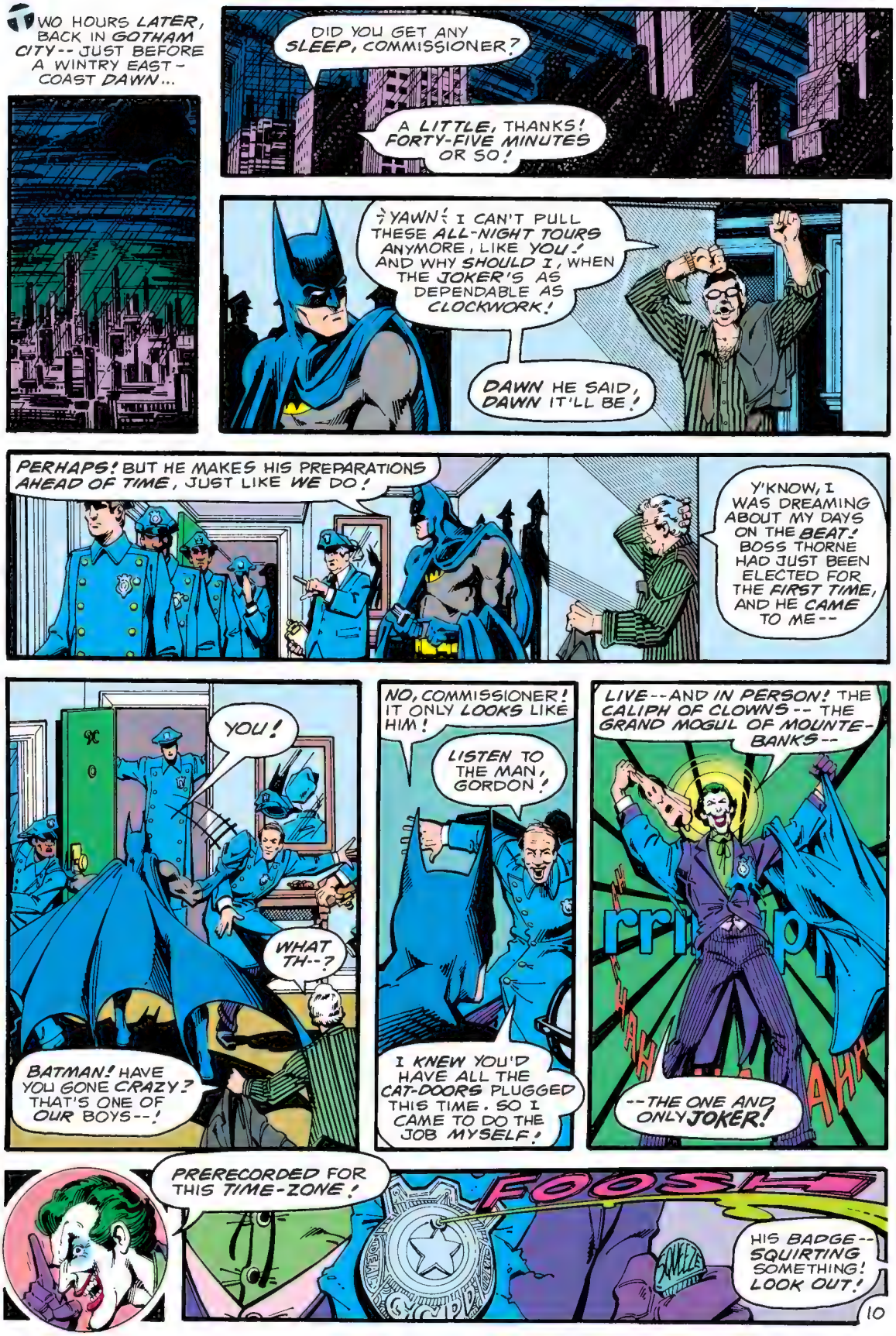
NOW, JUST A MINUTE--!
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE SO LILY-WHITE YOURSELF--"BOSS"!
THE WAY I HEAR IT, YOU AND YOUR "COUNCIL" HAVE BEEN GRAFTING OFF GOTHAM FOR YEARS! YOU'VE GOT A WHOLE POLITICAL MACHINE TO KEEP YOU ELECTED BY HOOK OR BY CROOK--!

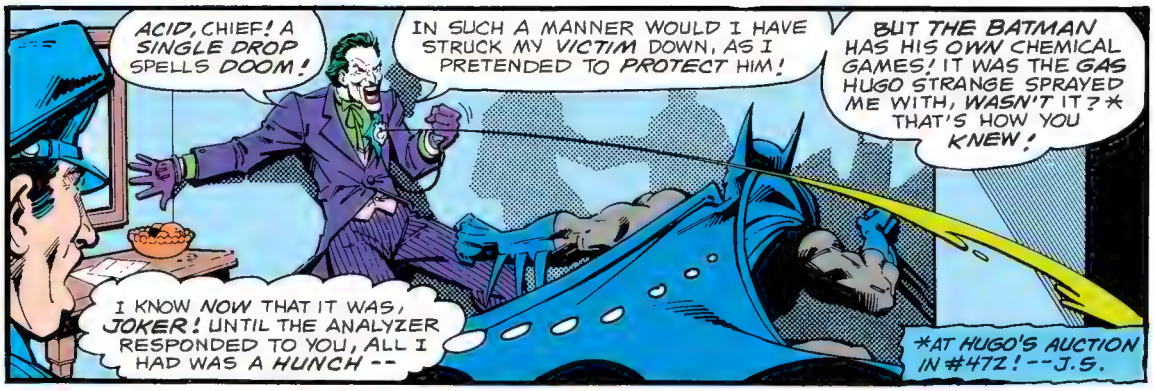
I DON'T HAVE TO STAND FOR THIS!
YOUNG LADY, I'M DUE SOME RESPECT! I'M THE PRESIDENT OF THE--
NOBODY WHO PUTS THE BATMAN DOWN IS DUE ANYTHING! I BET YOU'RE BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN TO HAVE HIM THROWN OUT OF TOWN!


THORNE, THAT ONE MAN HAS GIVEN HIS LIFE TO GOTHAM--THE CITY, THE PEOPLE--HE'S OUR AVENGING ANGEL!
THEY SAY NOBODY CARES ABOUT THE CITY ANYMORE, BUT HE DOES! HE--


GET OUT! GET OUT, YOU DUMB BROAD! I DON'T NEED THIS AGGRAVATION! TAKE YOUR BLEEDING HEART AND GET OUT!
COOL YOUR ENGINES, THORNE! I'M GETTING!
SKREE
WELL... WHAT NOW, SILVER?
GUESS I'LL CHECK OUT THAT GLOW OVER THERE!
WHAT LUCK! THERE'S SOMEONE UP AT THIS HOUR!
Chips
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, LADY?
MISTER, CAN I CHARTER YOUR PLANE?
8

THERE'LL BE SOMEBODY ELSE HITCHING! HOW WAS I TO KNOW SHE WAS A HERO-WORSHIPPER? STUPID SKIRT!
I'M RUNNING FROM A GHOST, DARN IT! GIMME SOME PEACE, AT LEAST!
THERE'LL BE SOMEBODY ELSE!
THERE!
WH--!?
AAAAAAAAAAA
MY SPIRIT COULDN'T REST UNTIL WE SETTLED OUR SCORE, RUPERT THORNE!
NOW WE SHALL BOTH REST IN PEACE!


TWO HOURS LATER, BACK IN GOTHAM CITY -- JUST BEFORE A WINTRY EAST-COAST DAWN...
DID YOU GET ANY SLEEP, COMMISSIONER?
A LITTLE, THANKS! FORTY-FIVE MINUTES OR SO!
YAWN! I CAN'T PULL THESE ALL-NIGHT TOURS ANYMORE, LIKE YOU! AND WHY SHOULD I, WHEN THE JOKER'S AS DEPENDABLE AS CLOCKWORK!
DAWN HE SAID, DAWN IT'LL BE!
PERHAPS! BUT HE MAKES HIS PREPARATIONS AHEAD OF TIME, JUST LIKE WE DO!
Y'KNOW, I WAS DREAMING ABOUT MY DAYS ON THE BEAT! BOSS THORNE HAD JUST BEEN ELECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND HE CAME TO ME --
YOU!
WHAT TH--?
BATMAN! HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY? THAT'S ONE OF OUR BOYS--!
NO, COMMISSIONER! IT ONLY LOOKS LIKE HIM!
LISTEN TO THE MAN, GORDON!
I KNEW YOU'D HAVE ALL THE CAT-DOORS PLUGGED THIS TIME. SO I CAME TO DO THE JOB MYSELF!
LIVE -- AND IN PERSON! THE CALIPH OF CLOWNS -- THE GRAND MOGUL OF MOUNTEBANKS --
--THE ONE AND ONLY JOKER!
AHH
PRERECORDED FOR THIS TIME-ZONE!
FOOSH
HIS BADGE -- SQUIRTING SOMETHING! LOOK OUT!

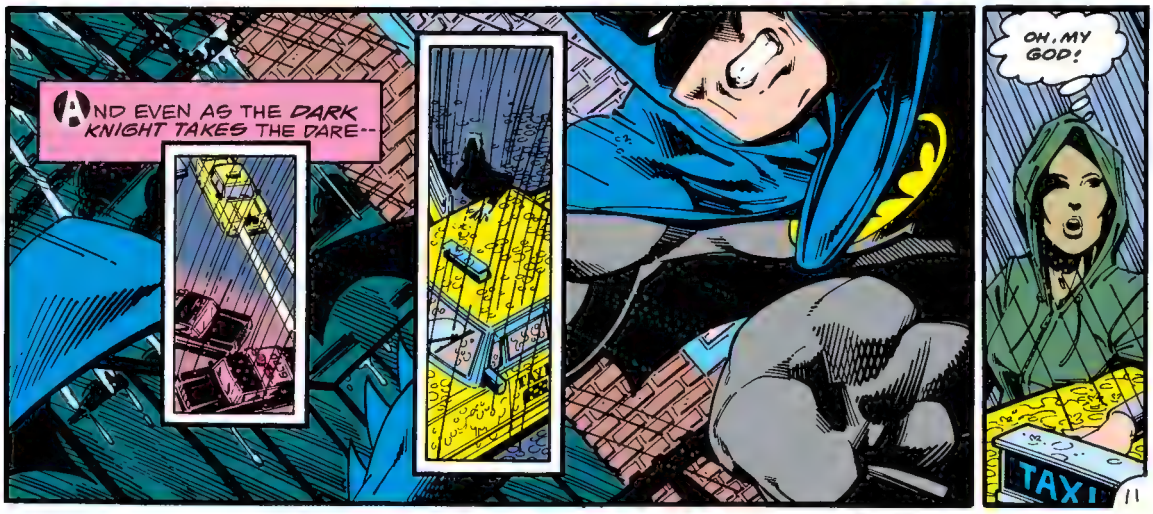

ACID, CHIEF! A SINGLE DROP SPELLS DOOM!
IN SUCH A MANNER WOULD I HAVE STRUCK MY VICTIM DOWN, AS I PRETENDED TO PROTECT HIM!
BUT THE BATMAN HAS HIS OWN CHEMICAL GAMES! IT WAS THE GAS HUGO STRANGE SPRAYED ME WITH, WASN'T IT?* THAT'S HOW YOU KNEW!
I KNOW NOW THAT IT WAS, JOKER! UNTIL THE ANALYZER RESPONDED TO YOU, ALL I HAD WAS A HUNCH --
*AT HUGO'S AUCTION IN #472! --J.S.

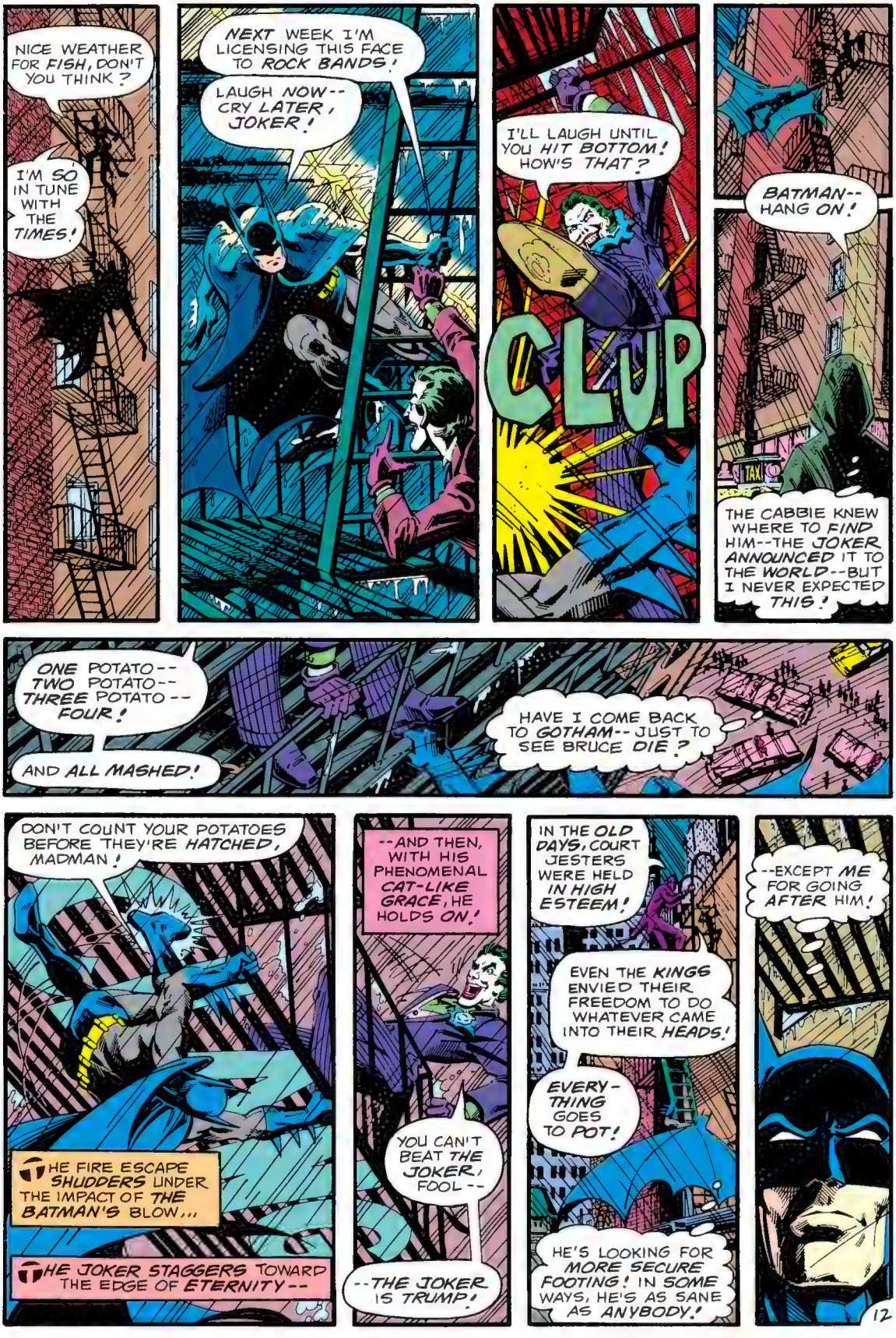
--A HUNCH THAT WHOEVER LEFT IT FOR ME MEANT IT TO BE OF HELP!
BLOK

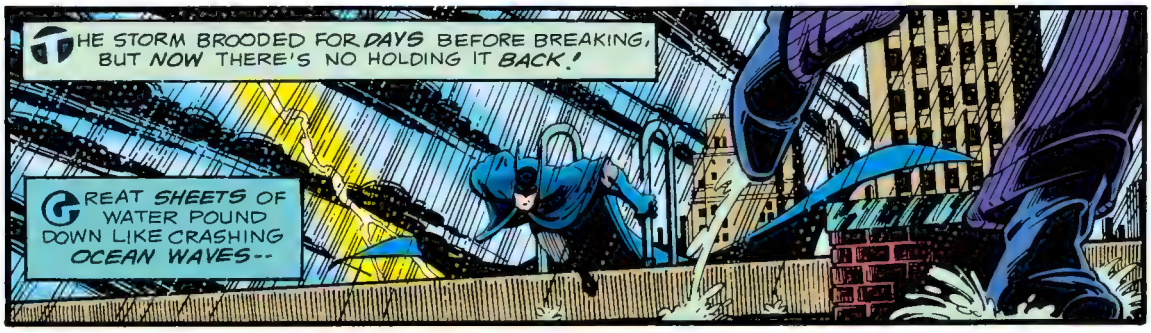
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
BAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

YOU'RE ALWAYS A PARTY-POOP--
--JUST WHEN I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE FUN!

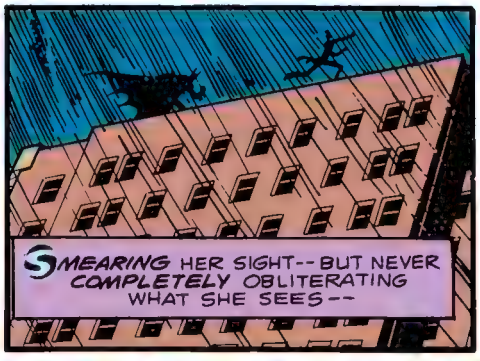
ONTO THE RAIN-SLICK FIRE-ESCAPE SCRAMBLES THE JOKER, NARROWLY AVOIDING THE BATMAN'S CLUTCHING ARMS!
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!

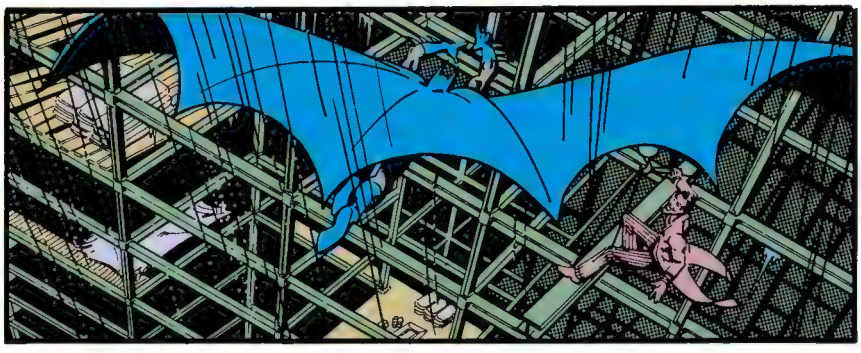

AND EVEN AS THE DARK KNIGHT TAKES THE DARE--
OH, MY GOD!
TAXI

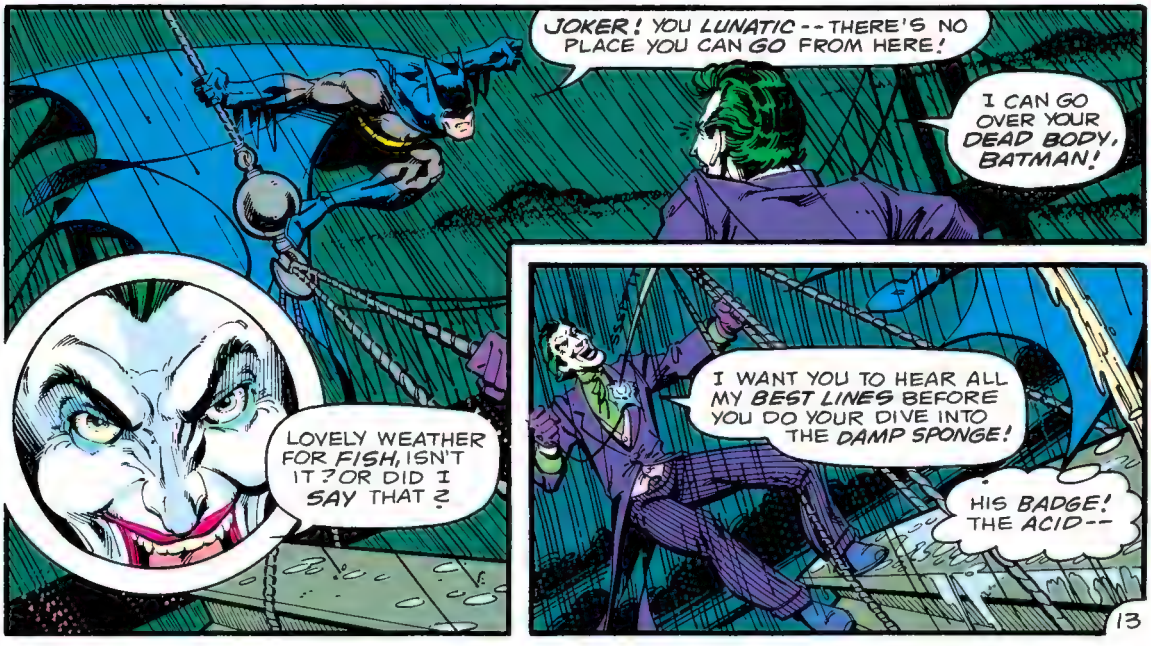

NICE WEATHER FOR FISH, DON'T YOU THINK?
I'M SO IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES!
NEXT WEEK I'M LICENSING THIS FACE TO ROCK BANDS!
LAUGH NOW--CRY LATER, JOKER!
I'LL LAUGH UNTIL YOU HIT BOTTOM! HOW'S THAT?
CLUP
BATMAN--HANG ON!
TAXI
THE CABBIE KNEW WHERE TO FIND HIM--THE JOKER ANNOUNCED IT TO THE WORLD--BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS!
ONE POTATO--TWO POTATO--THREE POTATO--FOUR!
AND ALL MASHED!
HAVE I COME BACK TO GOTHAM--JUST TO SEE BRUCE DIE?
DON'T COUNT YOUR POTATOES BEFORE THEY'RE HATCHED, MADMAN!
THE FIRE ESCAPE SHUDDERS UNDER THE IMPACT OF THE BATMAN'S BLOW...
THE JOKER STAGGERS TOWARD THE EDGE OF ETERNITY--
--AND THEN, WITH HIS PHENOMENAL CAT-LIKE GRACE, HE HOLDS ON!
YOU CAN'T BEAT THE JOKER, FOOL--
--THE JOKER IS TRUMP!
IN THE OLD DAYS, COURT JESTERS WERE HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM!
EVEN THE KINGS ENVIED THEIR FREEDOM TO DO WHATEVER CAME INTO THEIR HEADS!
EVERY-THING GOES TO POT!
HE'S LOOKING FOR MORE SECURE FOOTING! IN SOME WAYS, HE'S AS SANE AS ANYBODY!
--EXCEPT ME FOR GOING AFTER HIM!



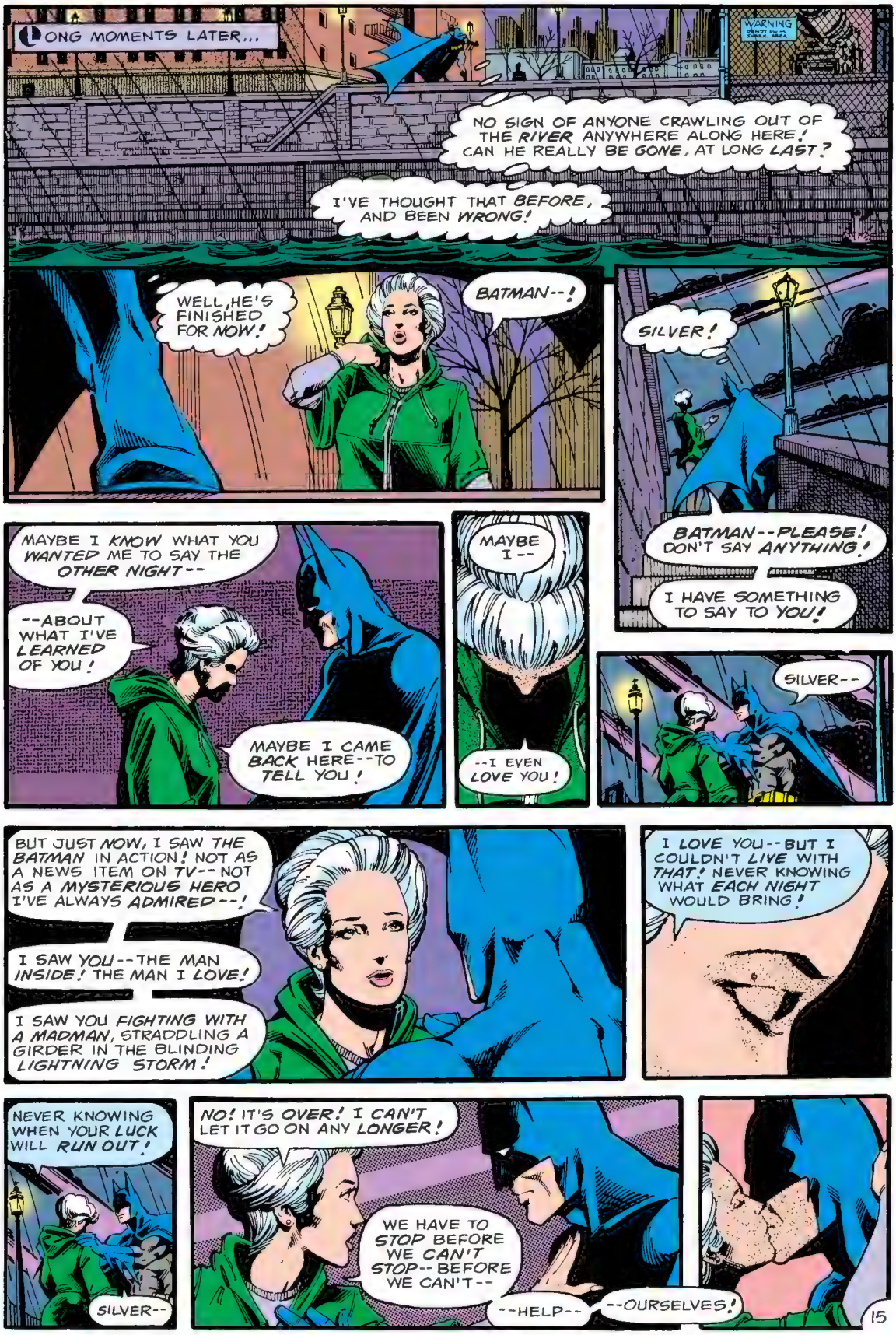
--SMEARING THE SIGHT OF SILVER ST. CLOUD AS SHE FIGHTS TO PEER UPWARD INTO THE STORM'S FULL FURY--

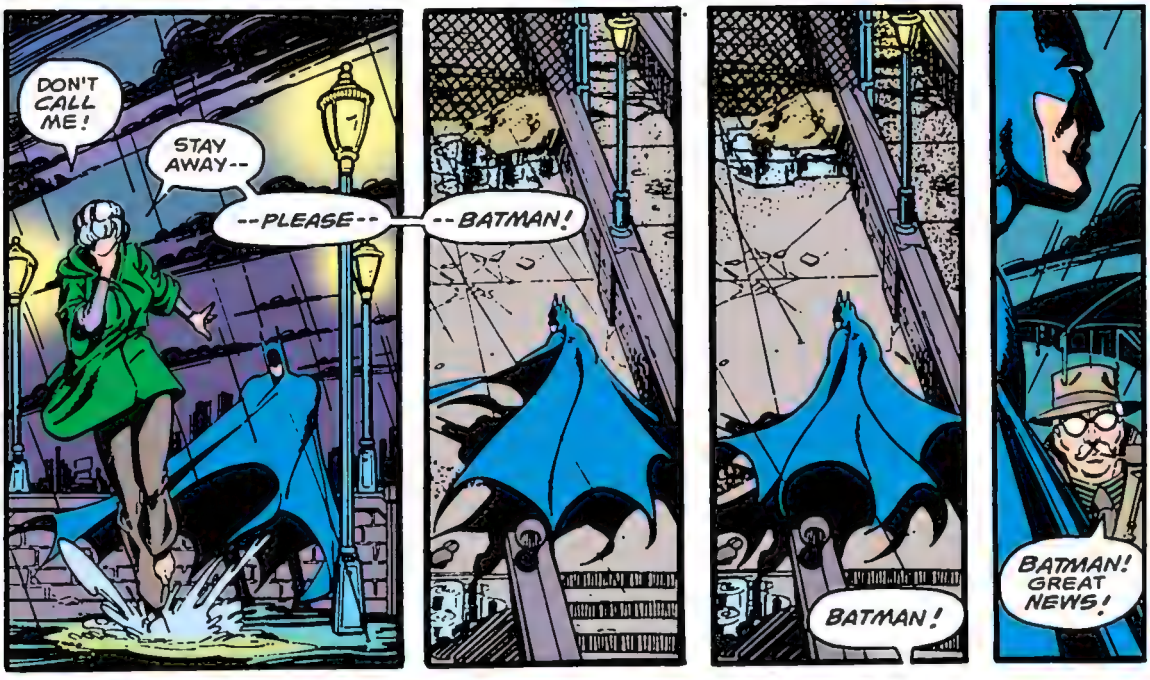




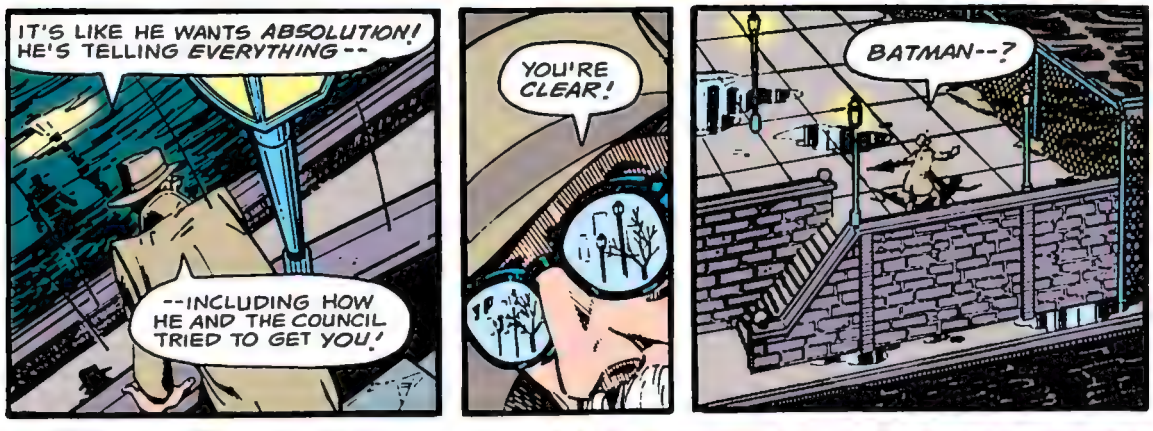


A SUDDEN, DESPERATE LUNGE--
AND THEN ALL AT ONCE--


LONG MOMENTS LATER...
WARNING
NO SIGN OF ANYONE CRAWLING OUT OF THE RIVER ANYWHERE ALONG HERE! CAN HE REALLY BE GONE, AT LONG LAST?
I'VE THOUGHT THAT BEFORE, AND BEEN WRONG!
WELL, HE'S FINISHED FOR NOW!
BATMAN--!
SILVER!
BATMAN--PLEASE! DON'T SAY ANYTHING!
I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO YOU!
MAYBE I KNOW WHAT YOU WANTED ME TO SAY THE OTHER NIGHT--
--ABOUT WHAT I'VE LEARNED OF YOU!
MAYBE I CAME BACK HERE--TO TELL YOU!
MAYBE I--
--I EVEN LOVE YOU!
SILVER--
BUT JUST NOW, I SAW THE BATMAN IN ACTION! NOT AS A NEWS ITEM ON TV--NOT AS A MYSTERIOUS HERO I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED--!
I SAW YOU--THE MAN INSIDE! THE MAN I LOVE!
I SAW YOU FIGHTING WITH A MADMAN, STRADDLING A GIRDER IN THE BLINDING LIGHTNING STORM!
I LOVE YOU--BUT I COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT! NEVER KNOWING WHAT EACH NIGHT WOULD BRING!
NEVER KNOWING WHEN YOUR LUCK WILL RUN OUT!
SILVER--
NO! IT'S OVER! I CAN'T LET IT GO ON ANY LONGER!
WE HAVE TO STOP BEFORE WE CAN'T STOP--BEFORE WE CAN'T--
--HELP--
--OURSELVES!


DON'T CALL ME!
STAY AWAY--
--PLEASE--
--BATMAN!
BATMAN!
BATMAN! GREAT NEWS!

THE OHIO STATE PATROL HAS PICKED UP BOSS THORNE! THEY SAY SOMETHING'S SCARED HIM OUT OF HIS WITS!
HE'S BABBLING CONTINUOUSLY-- EVERY CRIME HE'S EVER COMMITTED, SINCE BACK IN PROHIBITION DAYS!


IT'S LIKE HE WANTS ABSOLUTION! HE'S TELLING EVERYTHING--
--INCLUDING HOW HE AND THE COUNCIL TRIED TO GET YOU!
YOU'RE CLEAR!
BATMAN--?

IN THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY--
--HE IS GONE!
fin

the BRAVE and the BOLD

35¢
NO. 141
JUNE
30440

Presents...

BATMAN AND BLACK CANARY

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

YOU MAY HAVE CAUGHT ME, MASKED MANHUNTER--

--BUT NOTHING CAN SAVE YOUR PRECIOUS ALFRED NOW!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

WHEN A GUNMAN MURDERED HIS PARENTS, *BRUCE WAYNE* TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE WAR ON ALL CRIMINALS. NOW THE *DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE* JOINS FORCES WITH THE *BLONDE BOMBSHELL*, MISTRESS OF THE SONIC SCREAM, TO BECOME...

the BRAVE and the BOLD: BATMAN AND BLACK CANARY

KRAASHHH

WELCOME, *MASKED MANHUNTER!* AS YOU SEE, YOUR GORGEOUS GIRLFRIEND, *BLACK CANARY*, HAS FOUND A FINAL RESTING PLACE--

--AND I'VE GOT A COFFIN THAT'S TAILOR-MADE FOR YOUR HEROIC HULK, TOO! *HEE HA HO HEE!!*

"*OH, THE SHARK BITES WITH HIS TEETH, DEAR*"... GOES A FAMOUS SONG! BUT THE *JAWS* OF THE FINNED FANGERS OF THE DEEP ARE *NOTHING* COMPARED TO A CERTAIN TOOTHY TERROR NAMED *THE JOKER*, WHO RETURNS FROM THE BRINEY DEEP TO SAY...

HAHAHA!

BOB HANEY - WRITER • JIM APARO - ARTIST • JERRY SERPE - COLORIST • PAUL LEVITZ - EDITOR

GOTHAM CITY, U.S.A., HOME OF EIGHT MILLION SOULS STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL -- WHERE EVERY STREET IS SOMEBODY'S LOST DREAM -- EVERY COBBLESTONE HIDES A CRIME!

FARBER HARDWARE IF WE AIN'T GOT IT,

ANOTHER DAY OF LOUSY SALES! TOMORROW HAS TO BE BET--

WHAM!!!

AND WHERE ANOTHER HARD-WORKING BUSINESSMAN CALLS IT A DAY...

LEGGETT INDUSTRIES, INC.

LOST THAT BIG ORDER FROM WEJIT CORPORATION! THINGS HAVE GOT TO CHANGE...

BLAM

SO, AS HE HAS A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE, COMMISSIONER GORDON ARRIVES AMIDST THE STENCH OF DEATH...

TWO MORE RESPECTABLE BUSINESSMEN BLOWN TO BITS! INSANE!

COULD BE A RASH OF SUICIDES -- THE INSURANCE DOUGH WOULD HAVE HELPED BAIL OUT FAILING BUSINESSES!

BUT WHY ARE THEY ALL EXACTLY ALIKE?

NO, GORDON... THEY'RE ALL HOMICIDES... OF A PARTICULARLY NASTY TYPE!

SHORTLY, AT THE *GOTHAM CITY MORGUE*, WHERE ALL AROUND ARE REMINDERS OF ETERNITY'S ENCIRCLING AMBUSH...

NO WAY TO TELL HOW OR WHO BLEW THESE TWO TO KINGDOM COME!

ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE *SHIRT BUTTONS!*

FORGET THE *FORENSIC MEDICAL* CLUES THEN, DOC-- I'LL TAKE ANOTHER TACK!

BUT SO WILL SOMEONE *ELSE*...

AND NOT MUCH LATER...

GORDON'S REMARK ABOUT FAILING BUSINESSES GOT ME THINKING!

HMMM, FARBER'S HARDWARE STORE WAS IN *BAD SHAPE!* BUT HERE'S A RECORD OF A LARGE HUNK OF MONEY PUMPED INTO IT SIX MONTHS AGO!

AND HERE'S *WEEKLY* PAYMENTS TO PERSONS UNKNOWN OUT OF CASH FLOW!

THAT'S IT!

FARBER *BORROWED* MONEY--TRIED TO PAY IT BACK--COULDN'T--GOT BLASTED! TIME TO CHECK THE LATE MR. LEGGETT'S BOOKS!

SHORTLY...

THESE *BANK STATEMENTS!* LEGGETT WAS NO SMALLTIME SCREW-DRIVER OR THUMB-TACK DEALER!

HE BORROWED *HEAVY DOUGH* --THEN LOST A COUPLE OF BIG CONTRACTS!

AND LIKE FARBER HE MADE WEEKLY CASH PAYMENTS TO *SOMEONE ...VIGORISH!**

LIKE I SUSPECTED, THESE KILLINGS ARE LIKE A CRAZY SEQUEL TO "*JAWS*" ...*LOAN SHARKS!*

LEGGETT

**UNDERWORLD SLANG FOR LOAN INTEREST -- Paul.*

WHEN LEGGETT COULDN'T MEET THE "*VIG*" HIS *SHARK* BIT HIM-- FOR GOOD! WELL, CHOMPER --*WHOEVER* YOU ARE, THE *BATMAN'S* COMING TO HARPOON YOU!

THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE *MASKED MANHUNTER* "COLLECTS" A FEW DEBTS OF HIS OWN! HE WHEEDLES...

CAJOLES...

PLEADS...

PAYS QUIET VISITS...

AND... I'M OFF *SQUARE ONE* ON THE LEGGETT CASE, GORDON--BUT NOT BY MUCH! THE BIG *SHARK* IN TOWN IS A CERTAIN *MR. LONGREEN*... BUT NOT ONE STOOLIE KNOWS WHO HE REALLY IS!

MY FILES YIELD ZIP.. WHAT ABOUT YOURS?

NOTHING... NOT EVEN A WHISPER, OLD FRIEND!

CAN'T IMAGINE HOW YOU HEARD HE EXISTS!

BATMAN--?

BUT, MEANTIME, FATE, IN THE GUISE OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, ENTERS OUR STORY, AT THE EMPORIUM OF THE FAMED *PHENOMENON OF FASHION*... THE *GREAT ANTONIO!*

DINAH LANCE, DARLING! YOUR DESIGN IS ALMOST COMPLETE-- AND I'VE ACCEPTED IT TO BE IN MY SHOW!

I'M OVERWHELMED, *ANTONIO!* TO THINK I TRAVELED TO GOTHAM CITY TO HAVE *MY* GOWN IN THE *GREATEST COLLECTION* IN AMERICA!

THE *WORLD*, DARLING! AND DON'T BE HUMBLE, LOVE-- YOU HAVE *TALENT*-- LIKE ME!

MADAME MARINSKA! HURRY! THE *BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE* AND THE *OUT OF TOWN BUYERS* WILL BE HERE IN *ONE HOUR!*

DA, DA, *BUBSCHI!*

YES, BRAVE & BOLD ONES, IT'S *DINAH LANCE*, ALIAS *BLACK CANARY*, IN HER LATEST CAREER... AS A FASHION DESIGNER!

I'M *SO EXCITED!* THIS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE NEW LIFE -- AND IT'S ON MY OWN!

AND AS THE POSH CROWD ASSEMBLES AROUND THE RUNWAY...

MISS LANCE! YOUR GOWN-- IT MUST COME LATER IN THE SHOW! THE STITCHES *RIPPED!* THESE MODELS EAT LIKE THE HORSES, *DA?*

I'LL TELL *ANTONIO* TO INTRODUCE SOMETHING ELSE FIRST!

WELCOME, DAHLINGS... TO THE MOST FAB COLLECTION YOUR JADED ORBS EVER BEHELD--!

WHAT ??

WHRAM

ANTONIO! MY GOD!!

IN THE TERRIFYING CONFUSION AFTER THE BLAST, NO ONE SEES DINAH LANCE, DRESS DESIGNER, BECOME THE *BLONDE BOMBSHELL*...

THAT TALL MAN SHOVED ME CLEAR! HE HAD TO *KNOW* WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!

THERE HE GOES! AN EASY CATCH FOR *BLACK CANARY!*

TIME FOR *KARATE* PRACTICE! *HAI!*

KWAK

RISON'S
NIKINS

I'VE HEARD OF THE *DOMINO EFFECT*-- BUT THAT WAS RIDICULOUS!

WHERE IS HE? AAAH, THE ROOF!

WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP

WELL, I THINK YOU'VE *RUN OUT* OF TURF, MY FRIEND!

YES, CANARY...

...BUT UNLESS YOU CAN *REALLY* FLY...

HE'S STEPPING INTO THIN AIR?!

...THIS SHOULD UNZIP YOUR FEATHERS!

SCHOOL'S OUT, BUSTER!

THEN, *CAPED CRUSADER*...

...I SHALL ENROLL FOR A *POST-GRADUATE* COURSE... IN ASSAULT AND *BATTERY*!

KRAK'K

BLAZES!!

HA HA HA

AND AFTER THE TRUCK DISAPPEARS INTO TRAFFIC...

DA, MY POOR ENFANT *ANTONIO*! HE WAS WHAT YOU CALL *BROKE*!

HE BORROWED MONEY... COULDN'T REPAY IT... TO A *MR. LONG-- LONG GRIN*!

YOU MEAN *LONGREEN*!

WAIT! YOUR QUAINT MISPRONUNCIATION, MADAME MARINSKA...

...MAYBE IT'S *RIGHT* ON!

CANARY-- WHO ONCE HAD A *CRUSH* ON DINAH LANCE AND WOULD SAVE YOUR LIFE KNOWING *ANTONIO* WAS ABOUT TO SELF-DESTRUCT?

WHO LAUGHS LIKE A HYENA-- AND JUST LIKE THAT SKINNY BEARDED GUY WHEN HE MADE FOOLS OF BOTH OF US?

MR. LONG GRIN... THE JOKER!

RIGHT! UNLESS I'M WRONG, HE'S GONE *UNDER-GROUND* SINCE I THOUGHT HE *DIED* IN OUR LAST BATTLE-*

--TURNED TO *LOAN SHARKING* --AND HE'S KNOCKING OFF *POOR* PAYERS WITH A DIABOLICAL BOMB GIMMICK!

* DETECTIVE #476--Paul.

AND AS THE DUO FLIES VIA *WHIRLYBAT* AWAY FROM *GOTHAM'S* TEEMING *GARMENT DISTRICT*...

IF IT *IS* THE JOKER, WE HAVEN'T A *CLUE* AS TO HOW HE'S RUNNING THIS OPERATION!

TRUE, *CANARY*...

...BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN! A GUY IN REAL BAD NEED OF A *LOAN*!

SOMEONE WHO WAITS... WITHIN...

THE JOKER WOULD MAYBE SUSPECT *BRUCE WAYNE* COMING TO HIM FOR MONEY-- WAYNE IS *BATMAN'S* FRIEND!

LEMONADE... AHEM... MISS CANARY?

THANK YOU, ALFRED!

ALFRED! I JUST LOST YOUR *PENSION* IN A BAD STOCK DEAL... AND YOU FACE A *POVERTY-STRICKEN, ROTTEN OLD AGE*!

MY WORD!!

LATER, AFTER THE SCHEME IS SET IN MOTION...

OKAY! I LET WORD OUT WITH A STREET STOOLIE THAT YOU WANT TO BORROW *FIFTY BIG ONES*, ALFRED!

NOW WE WAIT FOR *MR. LONGREEN* ...ALIAS *LONG GRIN*...TO CALL!

OF COURSE, MR. WAYNE, SIR--BUT THIS IS HIGHLY IRREGULAR! I NEVER BORROWED A *DIME* IN MY...

...LIFE!

BRRRRING

ALFRED, THE BROKE BUTLER? *MR. LONGREEN* HERE! WE'LL PICK YOU UP TOMORROW AT SIX P.M. AT 52ND AND 5TH!

DESCRIBE YOURSELF--SO WE'LL KNOW YOU!

UH...TALL... IMPERIALLY SLIM... DIGNIFIED... MORE HAIR THAN AN EGG... LESS THAN A SHEEP DOG!

AND A SENSE OF HUMOR, I SEE! YOU'LL NEED IT, IF YOU DON'T PAY UP... CLOWN!

HA HA HA! SEE YOU TOMORROW!

:KLIK!:

THAT LAUGH! I'M POSITIVE IT'S HIM!

AND I DON'T THINK THIS TAPE PICKED UP A SINGLE CLUE! THE ONLY THING I HEARD WAS THAT LAUGH--AND A WEIRD SORT OF ECHO EFFECT!

NEXT NIGHT...

SLAP THE BLINDFOLD ON HIM!

AND AS THE LIMO GLIDES AWAY INTO MID-TOWN TRAFFIC...

PERFECT! I KEEP TABS FROM *ABOVE*...

...WHILE *BLACK CANARY* KEEPS A TAIL ON STREET LEVEL IN THAT CAB!

ON DUTY

BUT AS THE LIMO SUDDENLY *SWERVES* AROUND A CORNER...

I CAN'T KEEP UP-- BUT DINAH WILL RESUME THE TAIL SOON AS SHE ROUNDS THE TURN!

STEINS

AND SO SHE DOES... SEVERAL BLOCKS LATER...

THE PICK-UP CAR --*STALLED* AT THIS STOP SIGN FOR MINUTES? AND THERE'S ALFRED-- *ALONE*?

STOP

A DUMMY!

AND THAT'S WHAT BATMAN AND I ARE-- AGAIN!

WHEN HER CAPED COMPANION REJOINS HER...

BLAST! IT WAS ALL TOO EASY! THAT'S WHY *JOKER* WANTED THAT DESCRIPTION OF ALFRED!

THEY MUST'VE SWITCHED TO ANOTHER CAR AND ZIPPED OFF!

NATURALLY, I COULDN'T PUT A TRACKER BEEPER ON GOOD OLD ALFRED-- *JOKER* WOULD SEARCH HIS EVERY PORE! SO WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND HOPE!

FAR ACROSS GOTHAM IN A QUIET SUBURBAN BUILDING, WHERE A TRACER *WOULD* HAVE LED...

WELCOME! NOT TO WHERE THE BODIES ARE...

ETERNAL REST
FUNERAL HOME

...BUT TO WHERE THE *MAZUMA* IS! I AM, OF COURSE, *MR. LONG GREEN!* YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD *LOAN SHARK!*

THE *JOKER!* THE MASTER WAS RIGHT-- AGAIN!

HA HA HA HA!!

I CHECKED ON YOU, LOYAL ALFRED! YOUR WASTEFUL PLAYBOY BOSS, BRUCE WAYNE, *DID* LOSE YOUR PENSION!

I...HATE HIM! IT WAS THE ONLY HOPE FOR MY SUNSET YEARS!

HMMM...BUT HOW DO I KNOW YOU CAN PAY THE *EXORBITANT INTEREST* I CHARGE--?

I HAVE A SURE THING IN THE STOCK MARKET--

--I OVERHEARD A TIP FROM ONE OF WAYNE'S *SMART BROKER* FRIENDS!

ALL I NEED IS THE CASH TO BUY IN!

AND FAILING THAT, I TAKE CARE OF WAYNE'S PERSONAL LIVING FINANCES... I CAN *SKIM OFF* PLENTY TO MEET MY PAYMENTS!

HAH! HEE! HO! CHISELING THE BIG BAD BOSS... I LOVE IT! THAT COFFIN IS NOW *YOURS!*

NOTICE IT IS BIG ENOUGH TO CONTAIN *YOU* YOURSELF... IF YOU *DEFAULT!*

NOW, IN THE *SPIRIT* OF GOOD BUSINESS-- A TOAST! TO SEAL OUR LITTLE *ARRANGEMENT!*

DOWN THE HATCH! BLOOD IN YOUR EYE! *PAY OR DIE! HEE HA Hiiii!*

A FEW HOURS LATER, A BLINDFOLDED MAN IS LET OUT ON A DARK STREET CORNER...

AND STILL LATER...

WHAT? YOU CAN'T REMEMBER THE SOUND YOU HEARD WHILE YOU WERE IN *JOKER'S FUN HOUSE* ... THE SOUND THAT MAY LEAD US TO HIM?

S-SORRY, SIR... BUT THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS SO *UNNERVING!* I'VE FORGOTTEN!

MR. WAYNE, SIR... I KNOW HOW HOT YOU LIKE YOUR BATH, YOUR STEAK MEDIUM RARE, YOUR BRAND OF AFTER-SHAVE...

...EVEN THAT YOU HATE COTTAGE CHEESE... BUT THE TELLTALE SOUND I HEARD NEAR THE JOKER'S LAIR... I JUST DON'T RECALL!

BLAZES! A FUNERAL HOME? THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS IN THE GOTHAM METROPOLITAN AREA! YOU MUST REMEMBER, ALFRED!

BATMAN, STOP! IT'S ALFRED'S SAFETY YOU SHOULD WORRY ABOUT NOW-- HE'S IN DEBT TO THE JOKER!

I'VE RUN A COMPLETE CHECK ON HIM, CANARY! SEE FOR YOURSELF! HE'S CLEAN OF ANY MINIATURE BOMBS... EXPLOSIVES... YOU NAME IT!

AND HE'S SAFE HERE! ONE OF US WILL BE ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES!

BUT AS THE WEEK PASSES...

IT'S TOO LONG--TOO QUIET! NOT ONE LAUGH OUT OF HIM YET! MAYBE HIS MANIACAL SIXTH SENSE TIPPED HIM OFF!

MAYBE WE HAVE TO START ALL OVER AGAIN!

JOKER MUST'VE KILLED THOSE DEFAULTING DEBTORS BY SOME BOMB OR GRENADE LOBBED OR MAILED TO THE VICTIM FROM OFF-SCENE!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT!

BRRIIING

ONE WEEK IS UP! SO PAY UP! YOU OWE ME FIFTY THOUSAND BUCKS ...VIGORISH!

MY WORD... THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS! MY STOCK DEAL HASN'T COME THROUGH YET!

IF YOU DON'T PAY, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU WILL BE EVEN *MORE OUTRAGEOUS!*

TELL THAT MANIAC YOU'LL PAY. WE MUST STALL FOR TIME UNTIL YOU REMEMBER THAT SONIC CLUE.

UH...VERY WELL, YOU *BLOODSUCKER*... I SHALL PAY! I'LL STEAL THE MONEY... FROM WAYNE!

AND AS DAWN BREAKS...

ALFRED'S TAPING *FIFTY THOUSAND* OF BRUCE WAYNE'S FORTUNE UNDER THAT MANHOLE COVER AS PER THE *JOKER'S* ORDERS!

BATMAN FEARED STAKING OUT THIS PICK-UP WOULD ALERT *JOKER* --BUT I THINK, DIFFERENTLY!

IF POOR ALFRED DOESN'T RECALL THAT CLUE ...WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN!

A FUNERAL! LORD...EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I STILL CAN'T LOOK AT A COFFIN WITHOUT THINKING OF HOW *LARRY* DIED--AND SHIVERING!

I'LL NEVER FORGET MY HUSBAND --NO MATTER HOW MUCH I LOVE OLLIE!

VC 1704

WHAT--?

AM I DREAMING... *LAUGHTER* FROM THE CORPSE??

HA HA HA

SUMMONING HER STRANGE SONIC POWERS, BLACK CANARY HURLS A WHISTLING WHAMMY AT THE RETREATING HEARSE...

EEEEEEEEEEEE

AHA! THE CASE OF THE LAUGHING CORPSE IS NOW SOLVED! JOKER!!!

BLACK CANARY!

INSTANTLY, FROM THE OTHER CARS OF THE PROCESSION...

BUT HERE COME THE JOLLY MOURNERS-- AND RATHER THAN COME TO GRIEF...

WAK

WHA

...I'LL UNDERTAKE TO BURY YOU WITH A BIT OF JUDO!

HERE'S THE PAY-OFF... WITH INTEREST, YOU WONDROUS WITCH!

AND SO, SHORTLY, IN A CERTAIN PENTHOUSE...

BLAZES! I JUST GOT A CALL FROM GORDON... THE JOKER'S CAPTURED *BLACK CANARY*... AND THREATENS TO KILL HER UNLESS I STOP PUTTING THE HEAT ON HIS *LOAN SHARKING!*

BAD NEWS, SIR... AND I FEAR THIS IS MORE OF THE SAME FROM THAT SAME HUMAN HYENA!

BRRNNNG

WH-WHAT? YOU WANT *TEN THOUSAND* MORE BY... *TOMORROW*? I THOUGHT THE INTEREST WAS *WEEKLY*?

HEE HAH HO! THE TEN G'S IS INTEREST ON THE INTEREST... VIGORISH ON THE VIGORISH! *HEE HAH HO HAH!*

REMEMBER, BY TOMORROW NOON... I MUST HAVE THE *TEN BIG ONES*... OR BY *TWO P.M.* -- YOU WILL *DIE* LIKE THE OTHER *DEFAULTERS!* AND *DE FAULT* WILL BE ALL *YOURS! HEE HA HO HAH!*

AND *THIS* TIME, THERE BETTER NOT BE ANY LITTLE BIRDS SINGING WHEN YOU DELIVER!

MY WORD... BY TOMORROW I... COULD BE... *DEAD!*

BLAST IT! WE'LL HAVE TO PAY... BUT HOW CAN *JOKER* BE SO CERTAIN HE CAN KILL YOU AT A SPECIFIC HOUR? IS HE BLUFFING?

NO... THOSE OTHER POOR DEVILS *DIED* LIKE *CLOCK-WORK!* ALFRED --YOU MUST *REMEMBER* THAT SOUND YOU HEARD! *YOU MUST!*

ALL I CAN RECALL IS HEARING FAR-OFF MECHANICAL LAUGHTER... MY HEAD WAS WHIRLING FROM THE WINE *JOKER* GAVE ME TO TOAST OUR DEAL!

WHAT? HE GAVE YOU *WINE?*

THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE GIMMICK THAT DESTROYS DEFAULTERS!

A CHEMICAL-TIMED EXPLOSIVE IN THE WINE -- UNDETECTABLE ...AND DIABOLICAL!

BUT *JOKER* DRANK IT, TOO... FROM THE SAME BOTTLE?

OF COURSE, ALFRED-- AND I'M SURE I KNOW WHY! AND THAT FAR-OFF LAUGHTER... MAYBE IT'S GOING TO GIVE *US* THE *LAST LAUGH!*

WHAT DIA-BAT-ICAL SCHEME IS THE CAPED CRUSADER HATCHING? THE NEXT DAY MIGHT TELL...
SO! THAT FOOL ALFRED MISSED THE DEADLINE!
SO HE WILL CROSS A FINAL DEAD LINE AT TWO O'CLOCK...IN EXACTLY...
...THREE MINUTES! WHAT! YOU!
YES, YOU MONSTER! IF I MUST DIE... I'M TAKING...
KRASH!
...YOU WITH ME! I'M CLINGING LIKE A LEECH... TILL THE FINAL BLOW-UP!
SHOOT! BLAST HIM!
SHOOT!! SHOOT!!
WAIT! EVEN DEAD...HE'LL STILL BLOW US UP, TOO!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE... ONLY A FEW MINUTES LEFT!
NO WAY, GOONS!
AIEEEEEEE
16

AND WHILE THE *CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME* DOES A DESPERATE DANCE WITH A HUMAN TIME BOMB...

HUH? B-BATMAN?!

THEN--IF YOU'RE NOT THAT INFERNAL BUTLER... YOU CAN'T EXPLODE! I'M SAVED! HEE HEE HA HA!

AND ANY INSTANT THAT LOYAL SERVITOR OF BRUCE WAYNE WILL DIE, ANYWAY... AND I'LL GO BACK TO THE *FUNNY FARM*...* LAUGHING! HEE HO HAH!

NO, YOU WON'T-- GREEN AND GRUESOME!

COME IN, ALFRED!

* JOKER SPENDS HIS TIME BETWEEN PERIODIC CRIME SPREES IN ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE! BUT YOU KNEW THAT! --Paul.

YIIII! LET ME GO... HE'LL KILL US ALL!

NO, HE WON'T! BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE HIM A *BLOOD TRANSFUSION* ...NOW!

QUICKLY, THROUGH *BATMAN'S* NOT VERY MODEST MEDICAL SKILL...

JOKER ALWAYS DRANK THE SAME WINE TO FOOL HIS *DEBTORS*--BUT HE'D ALREADY DRUNK AN *ANTIDOTE* BEFOREHAND!

THIS *BLOOD SWAP* WILL GIVE ALFRED THE SAME IMMUNITY TO THE EXPLOSIVE!

BEAUTIFUL! BUT HOW'D YOU FIND THIS LAIR?

ALFRED RECALLED MECHANICAL FAR-OFF LAUGHTER!

I CHECKED-- AND THE ONLY *FUNERAL HOME* NEAR A CERTAIN CHUCKLING BURGER STAND--WAS THIS ONE!

HO HA! HO HA!

MR. LAFF

OKAY, ALFRED, YOU'RE SAFE NOW! HOW DO YOU FEEL?

VERY *VIGORISH!* BUT I HOPE HAVING THIS HYENA'S BLOOD IN ME DOESN'T *LOAN* MY BRAIN A CRIMINAL *INTEREST!* HO HO HO!

END

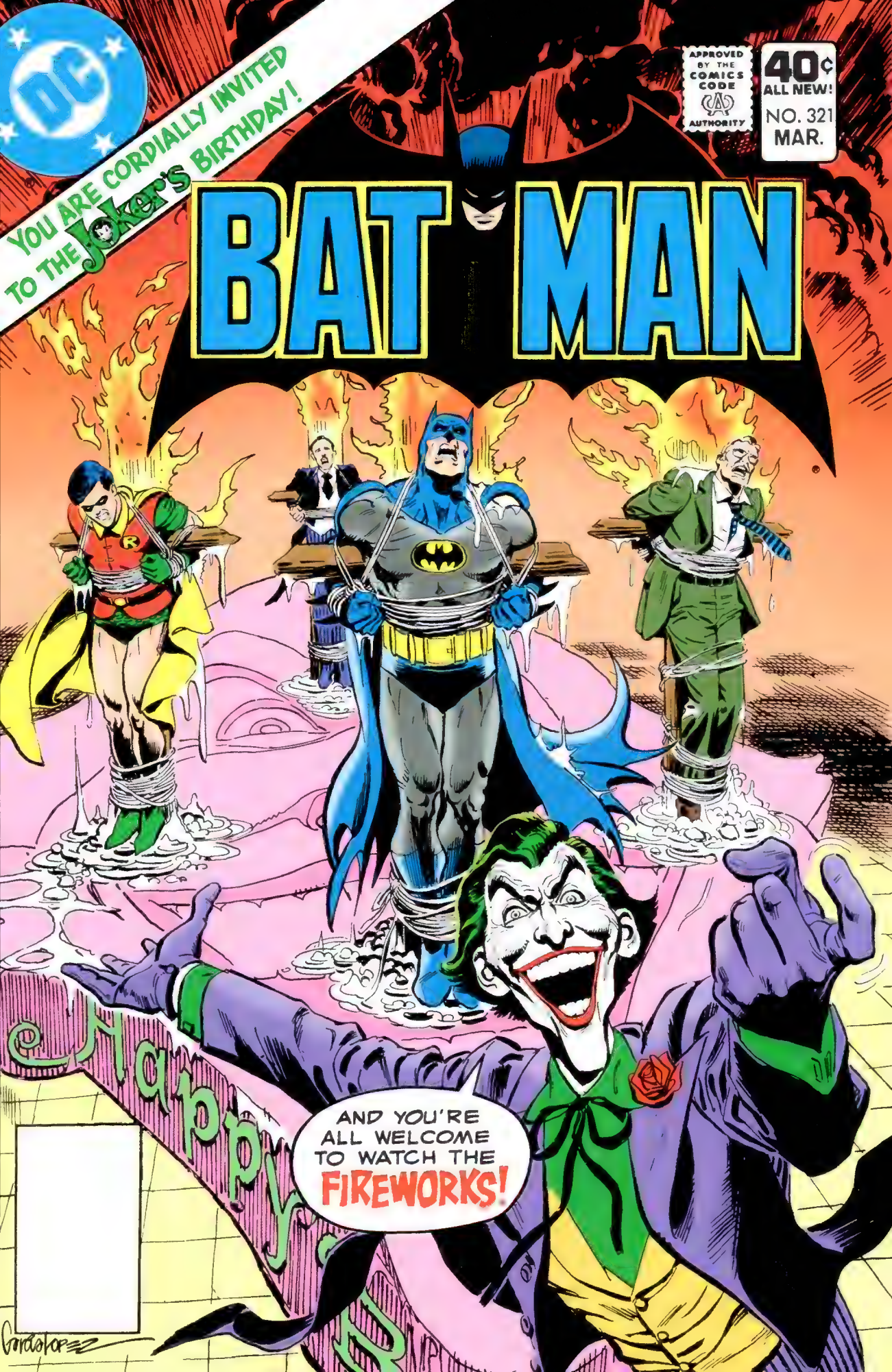
17

OUCH, ALFRED!

BUT DON'T BEG, BORROW OR STEAL THE NEXT *BRAVE & BOLD* CLASSIC... *JUST BUY IT* WHEN

BATMAN AND AQUAMAN

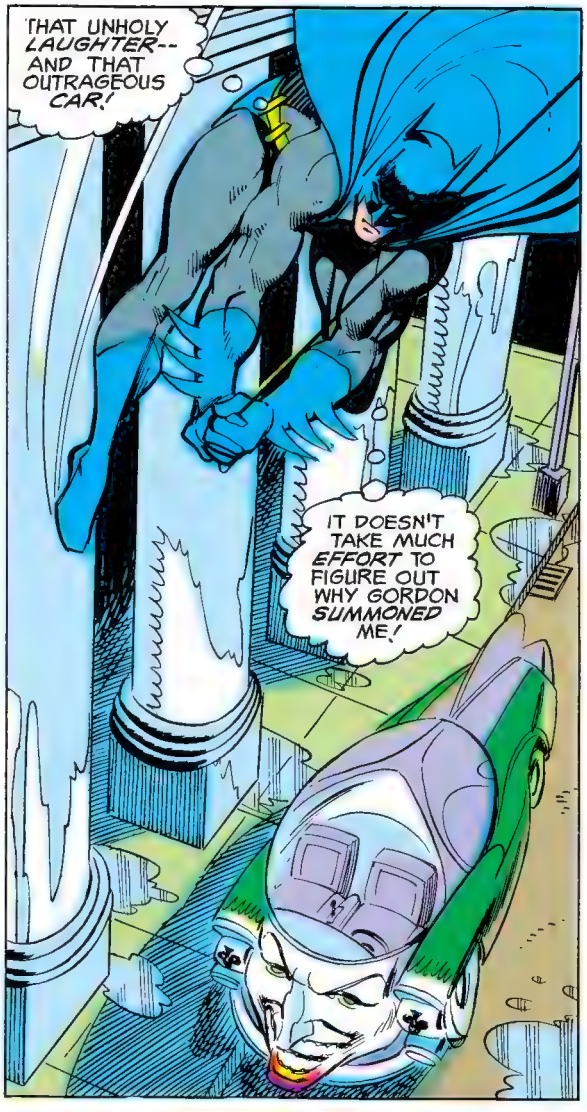
ARE LOCKED IN DEADLY COMBAT--TO DECIDE WHETHER A THIRTY-YEAR OLD SECRET WILL BE REVEALED!

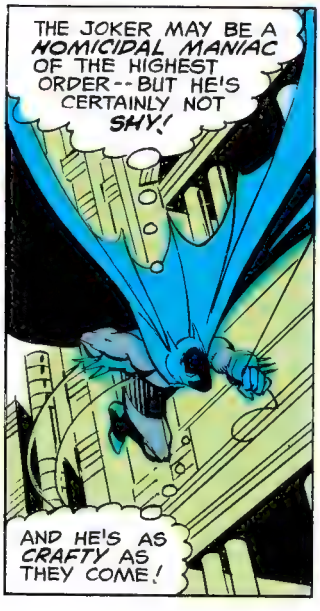

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE JOKER'S BIRTHDAY!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
40¢
ALL NEW!
NO. 321
MAR.
BAT MAN
AND YOU'RE ALL WELCOME TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS!

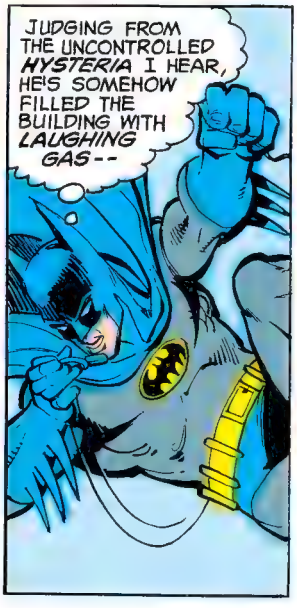
SINCE 1899, GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS HAS STOOD AT THE JUNCTION OF THE AREA CALLED FIVE POINTS, ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF THE CITY...
IN THE PAST 17 YEARS, COMMISSIONER JAMES W. GORDON HAS COME TO KNOW THE MARBLED CORRIDORS OF THIS PROUD OLD BUILDING WELL; IT HAS BECOME A SECOND HOME TO HIM--
--BUT TONIGHT, AS THE LEGENDARY BAT-SIGNAL SLASHES ACROSS A STORM-SWEPT SKY, IT MAY ALSO BECOME HIS TOMB!
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
COMMISSIONER GORDON! I THINK THIS IS FOR YOU, SIR!
DREADFUL BIRTHDAY, DEAR JOKER...!
LEN WEIN WRITER
WALT SIMONSON & DICK GIORDANO ARTISTS
GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST
BEN ODA LETTERER
PAUL LEVITZ EDITOR
J-6336

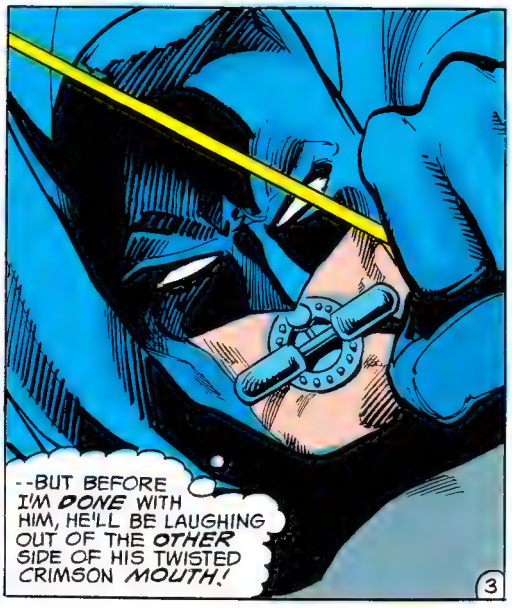
WHAT *IS* IT, SERGEANT?
DON'T *KNOW,* SIR-- I JUST FOUND IT LYING HERE ON MY *DESK!*
HMMM-- THERE'S NO *RETURN ADDRESS!*
I WONDER *WHAT--*
--OH NO.
Dear Gordie, you are cordially commanded to be present at THE JOKER'S BIRTHDAY PARTY tomorrow evening at 9:00 PM! Black tie optional, funny hats mandatory. R.S.V.P. B.Y.O.B.
DO YOU BELIEVE THE *NERVE* OF THAT CRIMINAL CLOWN?
AS IF I'D ACTUALLY *ACCEPT* HIS SO-CALLED INVITATION--!
AIN'T THAT-- *HA* A *LAUGH,* SIR?
YEAH-- *HA HA* --A REAL-- *HA HA* -- *LAUGH!*
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA
FRANKLY, FUN-SEEKERS-- IT'S NOT THAT *FUNNY!*
NO-- *HA HA* -- IT'S *HIM!*

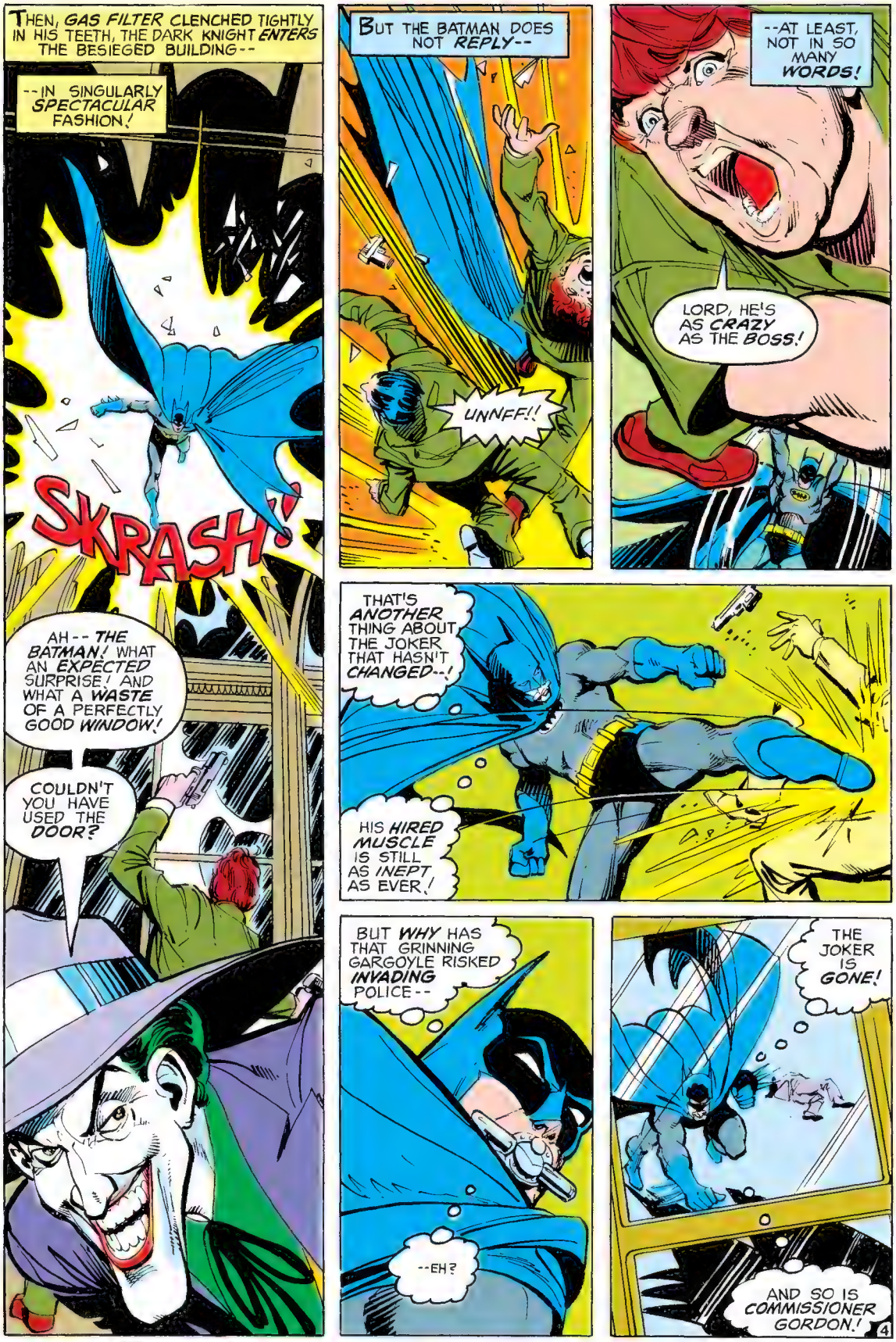
IN THE GLORIOUS PALE WHITE FLESH!
CONSIDERING YOUR CONDITION, GENTLEMEN, YOU NEEDN'T STAND-- BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE A ROUSING ROUND OF APPLAUSE!
AND WHATEVER THE JOKER WANTS, HE ALMOST INVARIABLY GETS!
HA HA HA HA HA

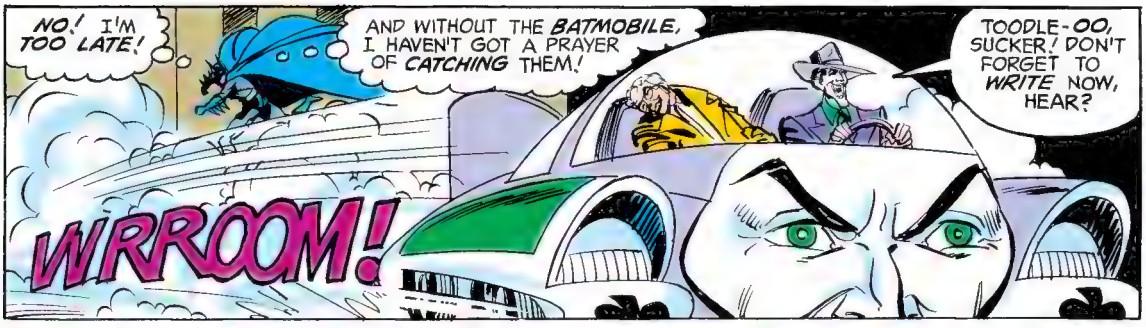

THAT UNHOLY LAUGHTER-- AND THAT OUTRAGEOUS CAR!
IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH EFFORT TO FIGURE OUT WHY GORDON SUMMONED ME!

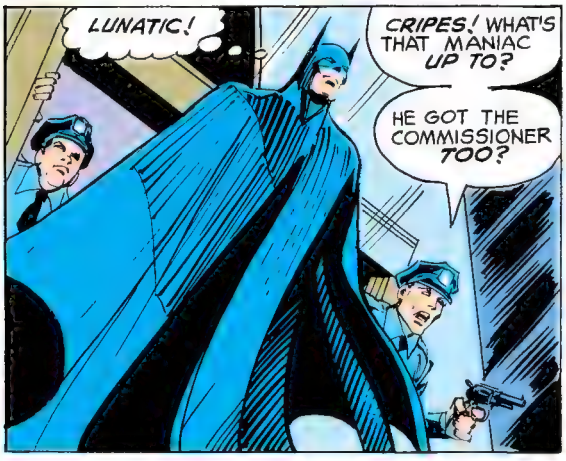

THE JOKER MAY BE A HOMICIDAL MANIAC OF THE HIGHEST ORDER-- BUT HE'S CERTAINLY NOT SHY!
AND HE'S AS CRAFTY AS THEY COME!


JUDGING FROM THE UNCONTROLLED HYSTERIA I HEAR, HE'S SOMEHOW FILLED THE BUILDING WITH LAUGHING GAS--

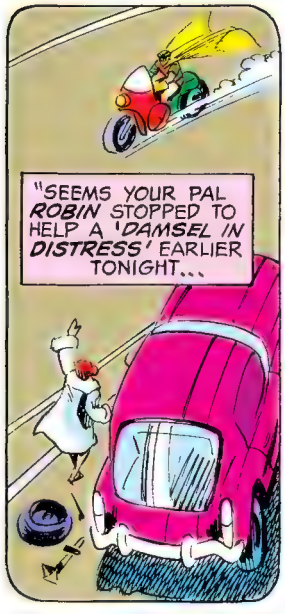

--BUT BEFORE I'M DONE WITH HIM, HE'LL BE LAUGHING OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE OF HIS TWISTED CRIMSON MOUTH!

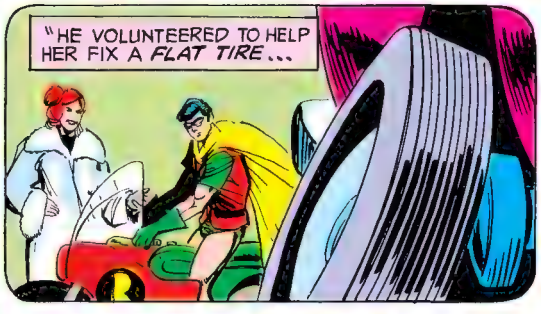

THEN, GAS FILTER CLENCHED TIGHTLY IN HIS TEETH, THE DARK KNIGHT ENTERS THE BESIEGED BUILDING--
--IN SINGULARLY SPECTACULAR FASHION!
SKRASH!
AH-- THE BATMAN! WHAT AN EXPECTED SURPRISE! AND WHAT A WASTE OF A PERFECTLY GOOD WINDOW!
COULDN'T YOU HAVE USED THE DOOR?
BUT THE BATMAN DOES NOT REPLY--
UNNFF!!
--AT LEAST, NOT IN SO MANY WORDS!
LORD, HE'S AS CRAZY AS THE BOSS!
THAT'S ANOTHER THING ABOUT THE JOKER THAT HASN'T CHANGED--!
HIS HIRED MUSCLE IS STILL AS INEPT AS EVER!
BUT WHY HAS THAT GRINNING GARGOYLE RISKED INVADING POLICE--
--EH?
THE JOKER IS GONE!
AND SO IS COMMISSIONER GORDON!
4


NO! I'M TOO LATE!
AND WITHOUT THE BATMOBILE, I HAVEN'T GOT A PRAYER OF CATCHING THEM!
TOODLE-OO, SUCKER! DON'T FORGET TO WRITE NOW, HEAR?
WRROOM!


LUNATIC!
CRIPES! WHAT'S THAT MANIAC UP TO?
HE GOT THE COMMISSIONER TOO?

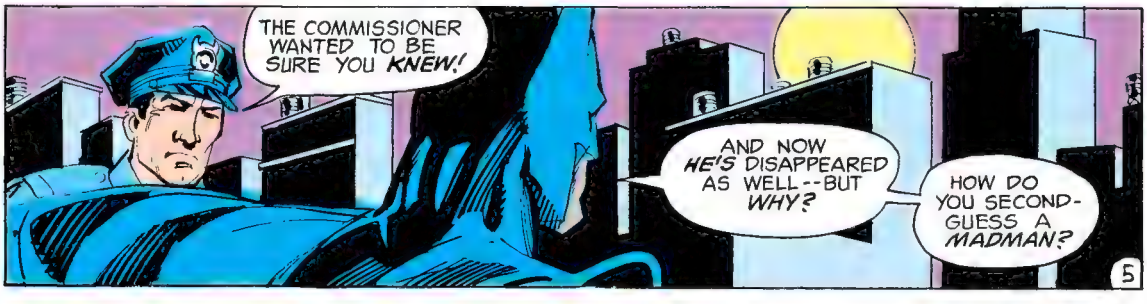
WHAT DO YOU MEAN--"TOO"?
GEEZ, YOU DON'T KNOW? THAT'S WHY WE CALLED YOU.
WE JUST GOT A REPORT FROM UPSTATE--FROM NEW CARTHAGE!


"SEEMS YOUR PAL ROBIN STOPPED TO HELP A 'DAMSEL IN DISTRESS' EARLIER TONIGHT...


"HE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP HER FIX A FLAT TIRE...

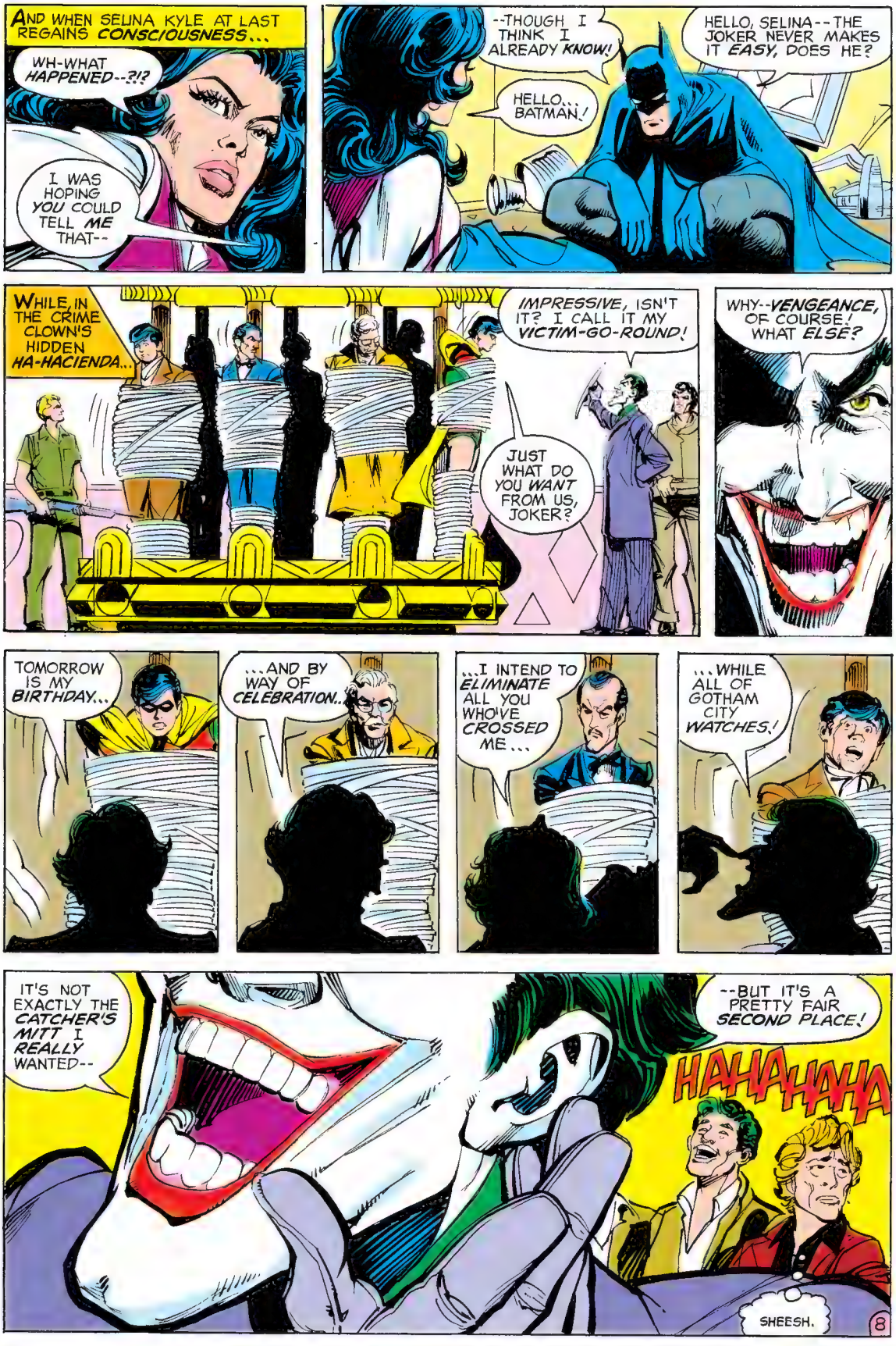
"ONLY THAT SPARE WASN'T NO TIRE..."
HUH? IT'S SOME KIND OF SUPER-STICKY TAFFY!?!
I'M STUCK!!

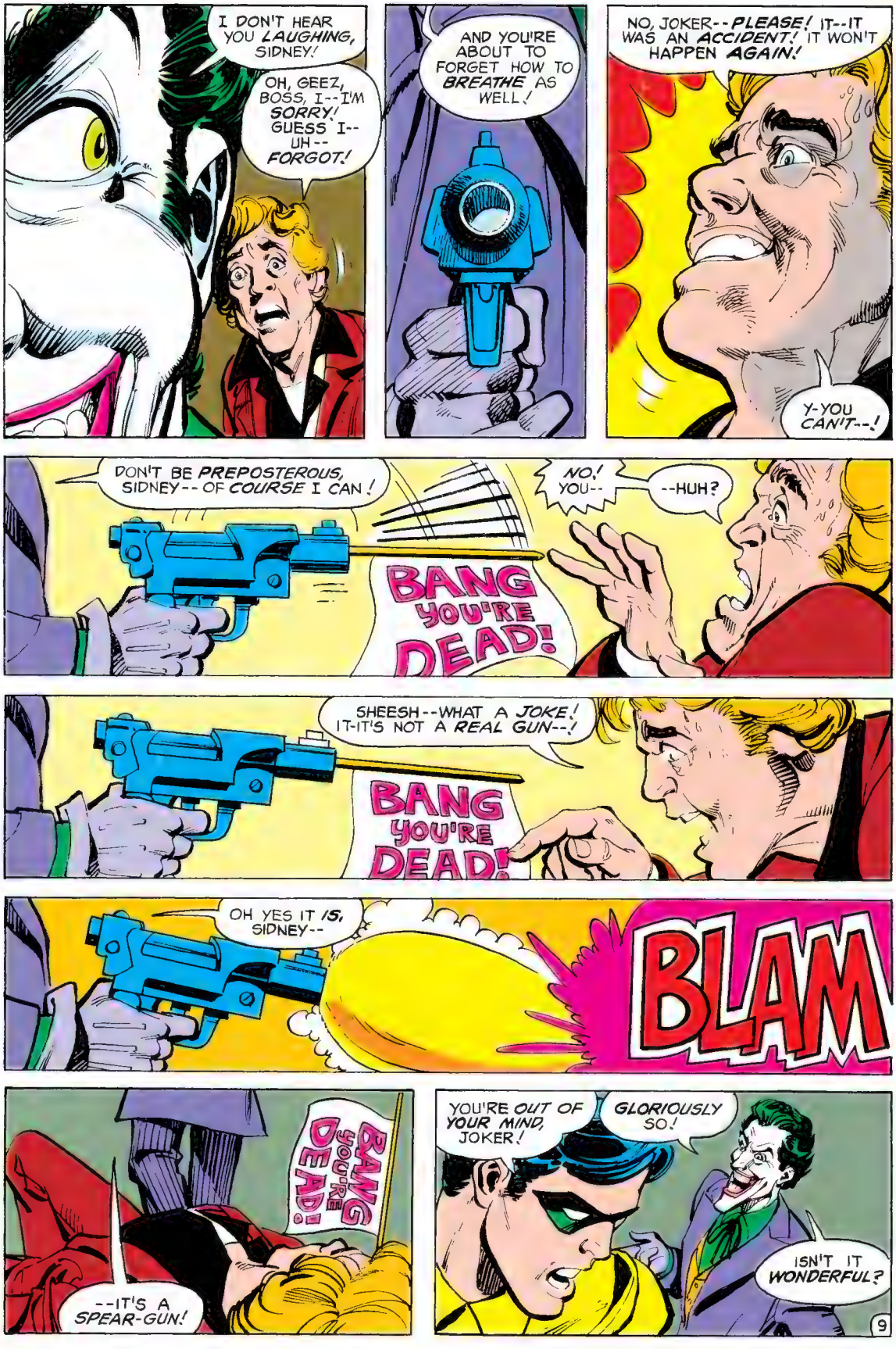
"AND THAT 'DAMSEL' WASN'T NO LADY!"
HA HA HA HA


THE COMMISSIONER WANTED TO BE SURE YOU KNEW!
AND NOW HE'S DISAPPEARED AS WELL--BUT WHY?
HOW DO YOU SECOND-GUESS A MADMAN?

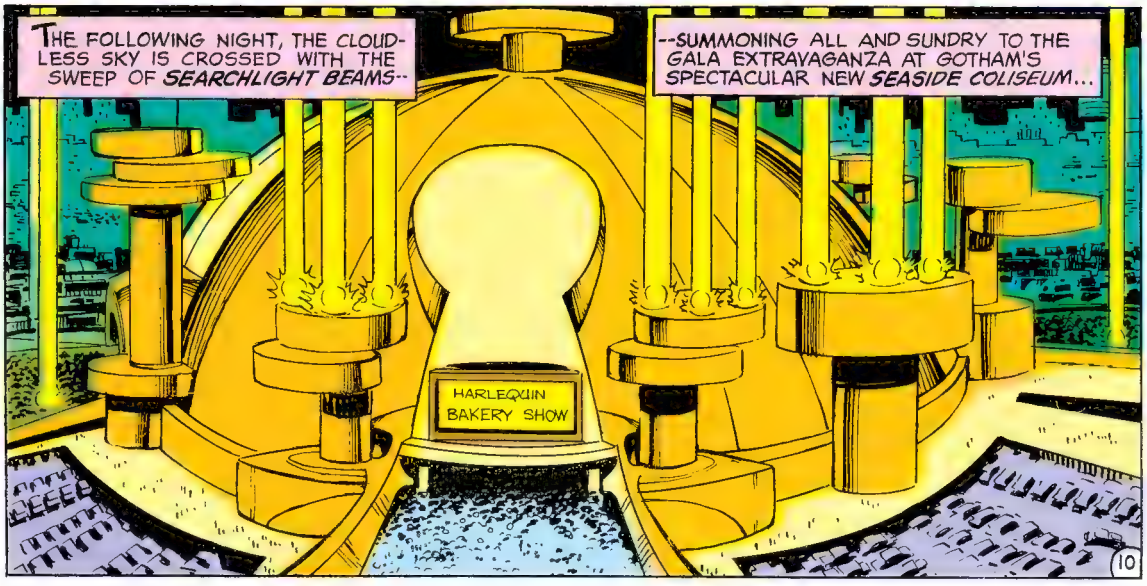
SHORTLY, AT BRUCE WAYNE'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT ATOP THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING, AS AN ODD BLACK SHAPE ECLIPSES THE COOL FULL MOON...
THANK YOU FOR THE ASPIRIN, ALFRED. THEY SEEM TO HELP... A LITTLE.
YOUR HEADACHES APPEAR TO BE GROWING MORE FREQUENT, MISS KYLE.
MIGHT I SUGGEST YOU SEE A DOCTOR--?
ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH BRUCE'S DR. DUNDEE IN--EH?
OH, EXCUSE ME-- I DIDN'T KNOW BRUCE HAD COMPANY, SELINA.
THAT'S OKAY, LUCIUS-- BRUCE CAN ONLY HAVE COMPANY IF HE'S HERE!
BRUCE IS OUT? BUT HE ASKED ME TO COME OVER TO DISCUSS THESE ARBITRAGE DEALS--!?
HE GOT CALLED AWAY... ON SUDDEN BUSINESS.
I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD BE USED TO THAT, MR. FOX.
EH? FOOTSTEPS ON THE ROOF--?!? MASTER BRUCE MUST BE RETURNING!
I'D BEST DISTRACT MASTER FOX AND MISS KYLE WHILE--
BUT THOUGH ALFRED'S CONCERN IS NOT UNFOUNDED--
KWA-WHOOM!
--HIS PLANNED DISTRACTION WILL HARDLY BE NECESSARY!
6

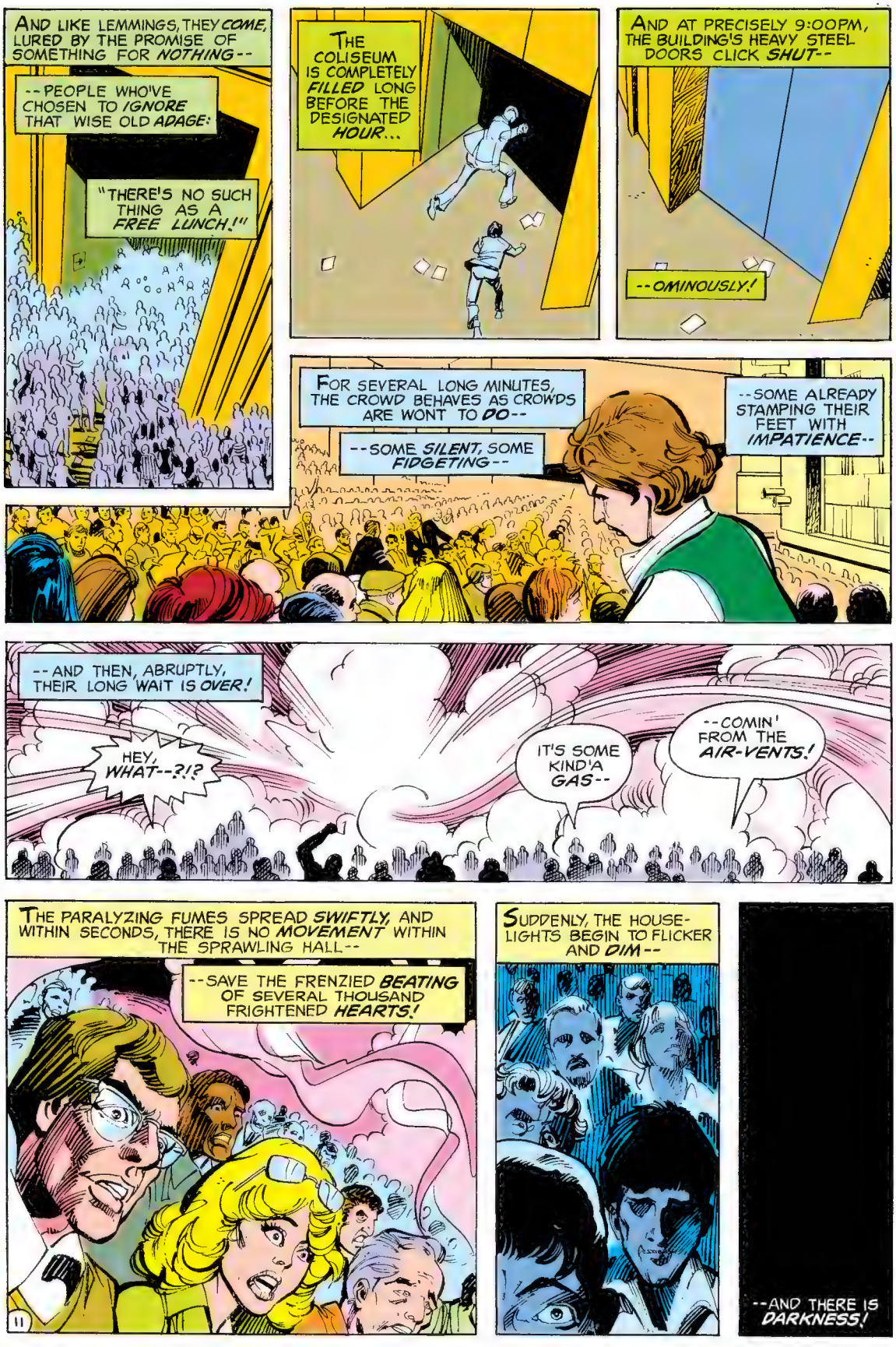
MY, MY--IT'S AMAZING HOW FAR A LITTLE DYNAMITE WILL GO THESE DAYS, ISN'T IT?
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE ALL STILL BREATHIN', BOSS--BUT THEY AIN'T GONNA BE MOVIN' FOR A WHILE.
"THEN KINDLY LOAD WAYNE'S FAITHFUL SERVANT ABOARD OUR TRANSPORT--AND WE'LL BE OFF!"
YOU'VE BEEN OFF FOR AS LONG AS I'VE KNOWN YOU, JOKER.
WHAT--? COULD IT BE?
SELINA KYLE--THE SULTRY CATWOMAN--HERE?!?
IT NOT ONLY COULD BE, SMILEY--
--IT VERY DEFINITELY IS.
CHOK
NOW WHY DON'T YOU AND YOUR TRAINED GORILLAS TAKE A HIKE, JOKER--
--WHILE YOU STILL CAN.
MY DEAR SELINA--PLEASE.
I PROFUSELY APOLOGIZE IF I'VE ACCIDENTALLY INTERRUPTED A CAPER OF YOUR OWN.
ACCEPT THESE ROSES AS A TOKEN OF MY SINCERITY.
I WARN YOU, JOKER--IF YOU'RE TRYING ANYTHING--!
OH, I ASSURE YOU, MY DEAR--
--I MOST CERTAINLY AM.
UUNNFFF!!
POW!

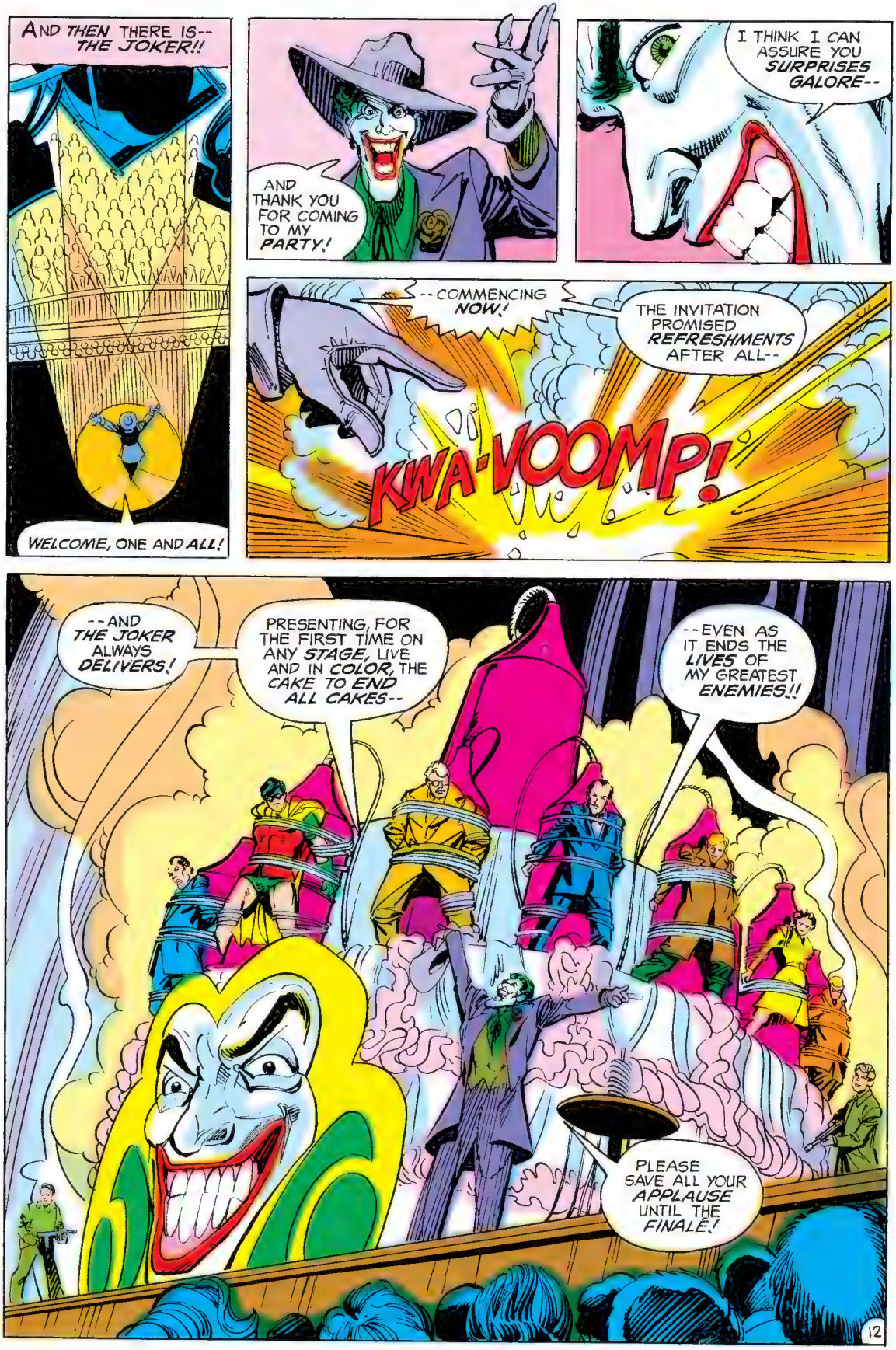

AND WHEN SELINA KYLE AT LAST REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS...
WH-WHAT HAPPENED--?!?
I WAS HOPING YOU COULD TELL ME THAT--
--THOUGH I THINK I ALREADY KNOW!
HELLO... BATMAN.
HELLO, SELINA--THE JOKER NEVER MAKES IT EASY, DOES HE?
WHILE, IN THE CRIME CLOWN'S HIDDEN HA-HACIENDA...
IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T IT? I CALL IT MY VICTIM-GO-ROUND!
JUST WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US, JOKER?
WHY--VENGEANCE, OF COURSE! WHAT ELSE?
TOMORROW IS MY BIRTHDAY...
...AND BY WAY OF CELEBRATION...
...I INTEND TO ELIMINATE ALL YOU WHO'VE CROSSED ME...
...WHILE ALL OF GOTHAM CITY WATCHES.!
IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE CATCHER'S MITT I REALLY WANTED--
--BUT IT'S A PRETTY FAIR SECOND PLACE!
HAHAHAHA
SHEESH.

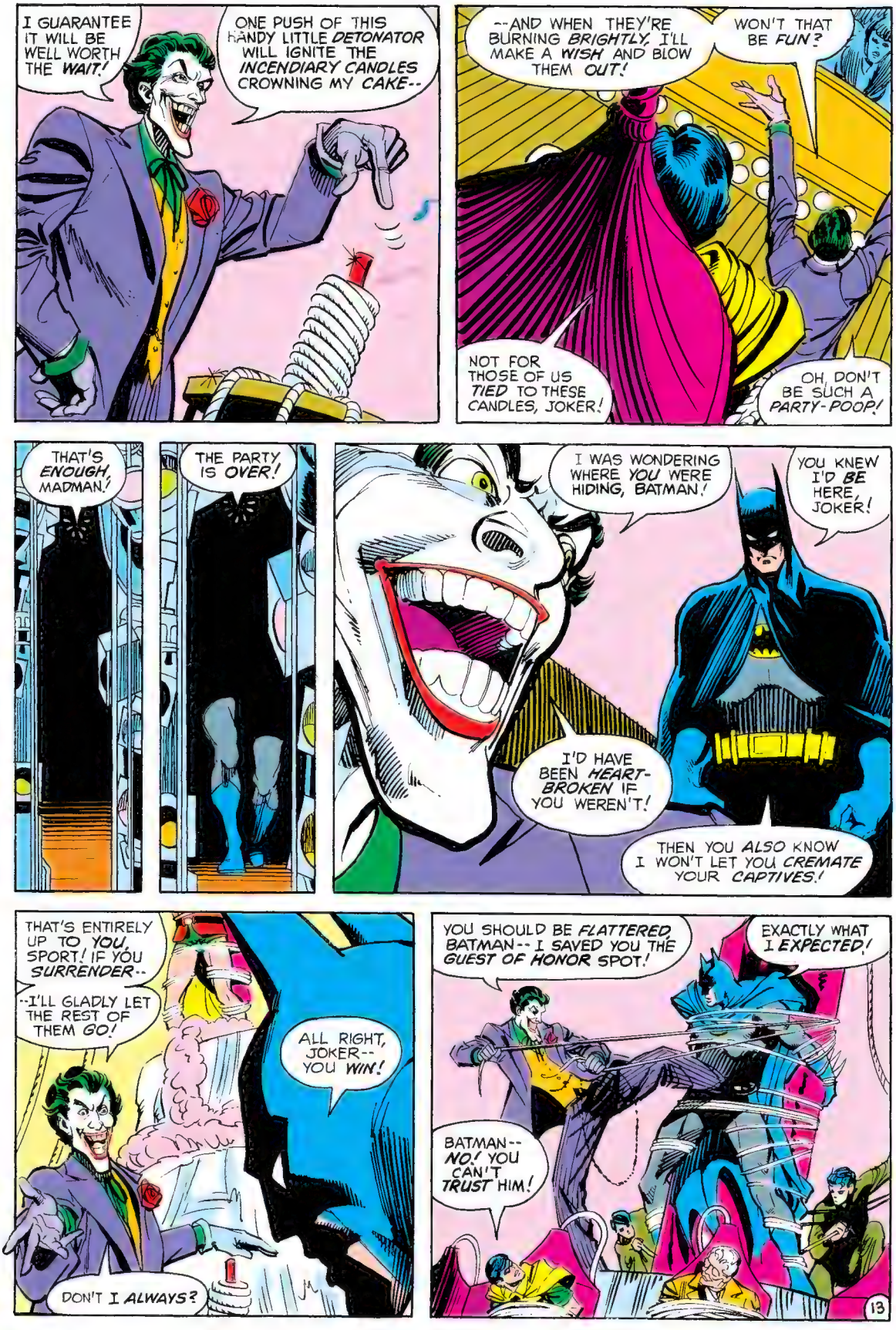

I DON'T HEAR YOU LAUGHING, SIDNEY!
OH, GEEZ, BOSS, I--I'M SORRY! GUESS I-- UH-- FORGOT!
AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO FORGET HOW TO BREATHE AS WELL!
NO, JOKER--PLEASE! IT--IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!
Y-YOU CAN'T--!
DON'T BE PREPOSTEROUS, SIDNEY-- OF COURSE I CAN!
BANG YOU'RE DEAD!
NO! YOU--
--HUH?
SHEESH--WHAT A JOKE! IT-IT'S NOT A REAL GUN--!
BANG YOU'RE DEAD!
OH YES IT IS, SIDNEY--
BLAM
BANG YOU'RE DEAD!
--IT'S A SPEAR-GUN!
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND, JOKER!
GLORIOUSLY SO!
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL?

IF I WERE SANE, I MIGHT NOT BE SO BRILLIANT!
WHAT YOU ARE IS HALLUCINATING IF YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE THIS WORK!
WHERE WILL YOU FIND AN AUDIENCE WILLING TO WATCH YOU MURDER US?
THAT'S ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED-- IN TODAY'S LATE EDITION!
I JUST USED A LITTLE PSYCHOLOGY!
EXTRA! GOTHAM GAZETTE
LEVITZ TO HOSPITAL
IF THERE'S ONE THING NOBODY CAN RESIST, IT'S--
THE HARLEQUIN BAKING COMPANY proudly invites ll of GOTHAM CITY to sample its wares tomor- row at 9 PM at the SEASIDE COLISEUM! Refresh- will be served! come one
--A FREE SAMPLE?
SOUNDS TEMPTING! THINK WE OUGHT'A GO?
WHY NOT? IT'D BEAT SITTING THROUGH ANOTHER RERUN OF CELEBRITY BOWLING!
A VERY GENEROUS OFFER, EXCEPT FOR ONE LITTLE DETAIL:
THE HARLEQUIN BAKING COMPANY DOES NOT EXIST!
THE JOKER HAS FINALLY MADE HIS FIRST MISTAKE!

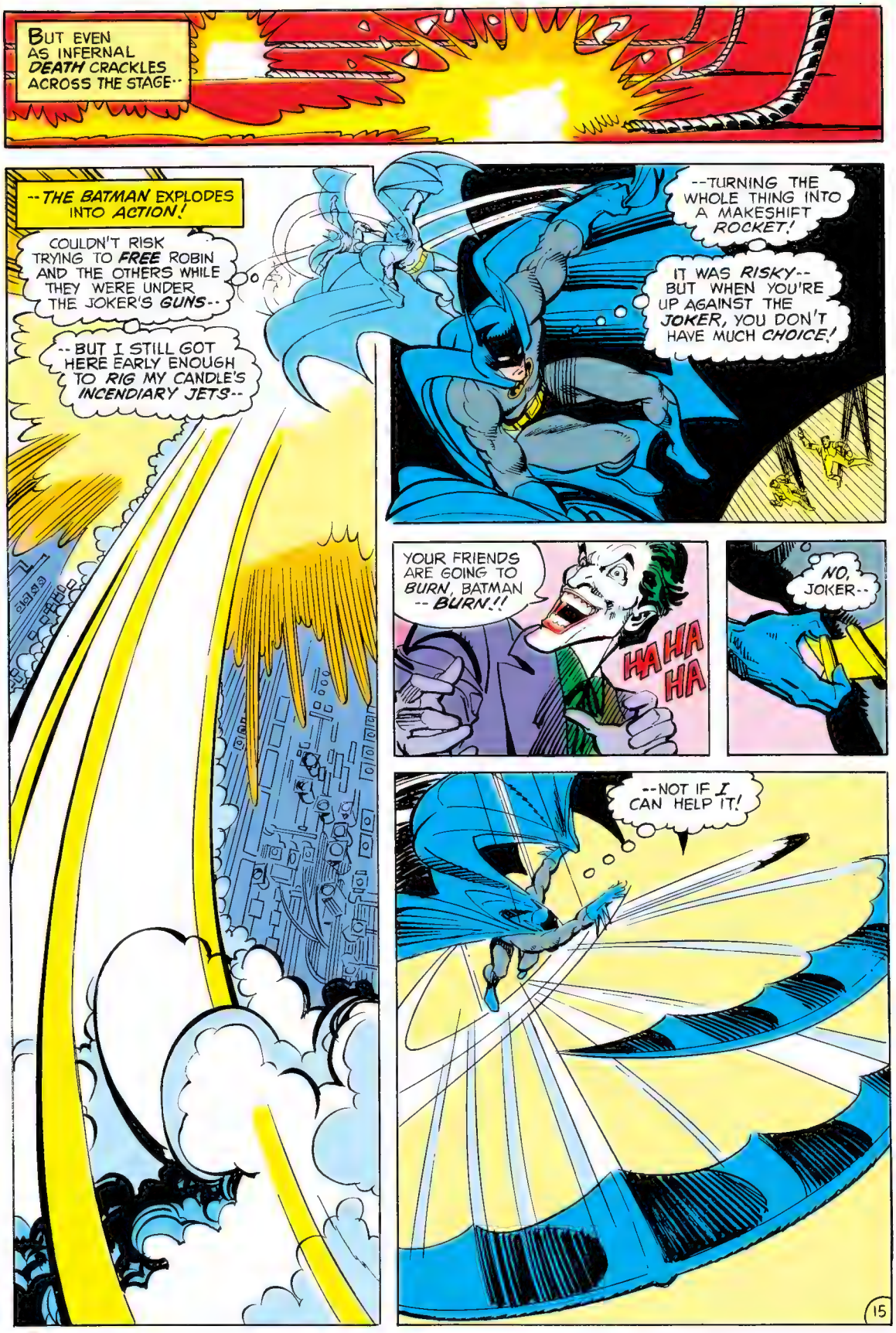

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, THE CLOUDLESS SKY IS CROSSED WITH THE SWEEP OF SEARCHLIGHT BEAMS--
--SUMMONING ALL AND SUNDRY TO THE GALA EXTRAVAGANZA AT GOTHAM'S SPECTACULAR NEW SEASIDE COLISEUM...
HARLEQUIN BAKERY SHOW


AND LIKE LEMMINGS, THEY COME, LURED BY THE PROMISE OF SOMETHING FOR NOTHING--
--PEOPLE WHO'VE CHOSEN TO IGNORE THAT WISE OLD ADAGE:
"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH!"
THE COLISEUM IS COMPLETELY FILLED LONG BEFORE THE DESIGNATED HOUR...
AND AT PRECISELY 9:00PM, THE BUILDING'S HEAVY STEEL DOORS CLICK SHUT--
--OMINOUSLY!
FOR SEVERAL LONG MINUTES, THE CROWD BEHAVES AS CROWDS ARE WONT TO DO--
--SOME SILENT, SOME FIDGETING--
--SOME ALREADY STAMPING THEIR FEET WITH IMPATIENCE--
--AND THEN, ABRUPTLY, THEIR LONG WAIT IS OVER!
HEY, WHAT--?!?
IT'S SOME KIND'A GAS--
--COMIN' FROM THE AIR-VENTS!
THE PARALYZING FUMES SPREAD SWIFTLY, AND WITHIN SECONDS, THERE IS NO MOVEMENT WITHIN THE SPRAWLING HALL--
--SAVE THE FRENZIED BEATING OF SEVERAL THOUSAND FRIGHTENED HEARTS!
SUDDENLY, THE HOUSE-LIGHTS BEGIN TO FLICKER AND DIM--
--AND THERE IS DARKNESS!


AND THEN THERE IS-- THE JOKER!!
WELCOME, ONE AND ALL!
AND THANK YOU FOR COMING TO MY PARTY!
I THINK I CAN ASSURE YOU SURPRISES GALORE--
--COMMENCING NOW!
THE INVITATION PROMISED REFRESHMENTS AFTER ALL--
KWA-VOOMP!
--AND THE JOKER ALWAYS DELIVERS!
PRESENTING, FOR THE FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE, LIVE AND IN COLOR, THE CAKE TO END ALL CAKES--
--EVEN AS IT ENDS THE LIVES OF MY GREATEST ENEMIES!!
PLEASE SAVE ALL YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL THE FINALE!

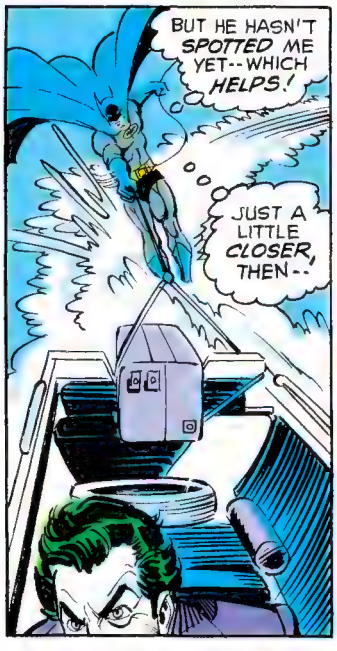

I GUARANTEE IT WILL BE WELL WORTH THE WAIT!
ONE PUSH OF THIS HANDY LITTLE DETONATOR WILL IGNITE THE INCENDIARY CANDLES CROWNING MY CAKE--
--AND WHEN THEY'RE BURNING BRIGHTLY, I'LL MAKE A WISH AND BLOW THEM OUT!
WON'T THAT BE FUN?
NOT FOR THOSE OF US TIED TO THESE CANDLES, JOKER!
OH, DON'T BE SUCH A PARTY-POOP!
THAT'S ENOUGH, MADMAN!
THE PARTY IS OVER!
I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU WERE HIDING, BATMAN!
YOU KNEW I'D BE HERE, JOKER!
I'D HAVE BEEN HEART-BROKEN IF YOU WEREN'T!
THEN YOU ALSO KNOW I WON'T LET YOU CREMATE YOUR CAPTIVES!
THAT'S ENTIRELY UP TO YOU, SPORT! IF YOU SURRENDER--
--I'LL GLADLY LET THE REST OF THEM GO!
ALL RIGHT, JOKER-- YOU WIN!
DON'T I ALWAYS?
YOU SHOULD BE FLATTERED, BATMAN-- I SAVED YOU THE GUEST OF HONOR SPOT!
EXACTLY WHAT I EXPECTED!
BATMAN-- NO! YOU CAN'T TRUST HIM!

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES AND ALL THAT!
ROBIN'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW!
JOKER, WHAT ABOUT OUR DEAL? YOU SAID YOU'D FREE THEM!
OH, COME NOW, SILLY BOY-- YOU DIDN'T HONESTLY BELIEVE ME, DID YOU?
FRANKLY, JOKER--
--NO!
KLIK!
AT THE PRESS OF A CONCEALED BUTTON, THE DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE'S CANDLE SUDDENLY BEGINS TO SIZZLE--
--THEN ROCKETS SKYWARD LIKE A GIANT FIREWORKS ON THE FOURTH OF JULY!
KWAVAVOOM
YOU MAY HAVE SAVED YOURSELF, BATMAN--
--BUT YOU'LL NEVER SAVE YOUR FRIENDS!
SLAM!


BUT EVEN AS INFERNAL DEATH CRACKLES ACROSS THE STAGE--
--THE BATMAN EXPLODES INTO ACTION!
COULDN'T RISK TRYING TO FREE ROBIN AND THE OTHERS WHILE THEY WERE UNDER THE JOKER'S GUNS--
--BUT I STILL GOT HERE EARLY ENOUGH TO RIG MY CANDLE'S INCENDIARY JETS--
--TURNING THE WHOLE THING INTO A MAKESHIFT ROCKET!
IT WAS RISKY-- BUT WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE JOKER, YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE!
YOUR FRIENDS ARE GOING TO BURN, BATMAN -- BURN!!
HA HA HA
NO, JOKER--
--NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!

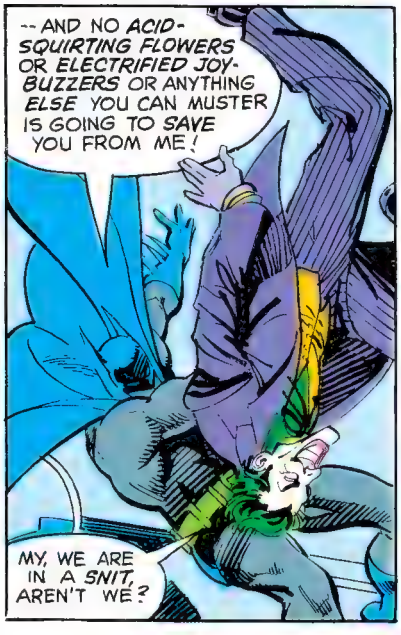
SNIK
SNIK
SNIK
HE DID IT!
HIS BATARANGS SEVERED THE CANDLES' FUSES!
BATMAN SAVED US!
DID YOU EVER DOUBT HE WOULD, SIR?
AND HIS FINAL BATARANG CUT THE ROPES HOLDING ME--
SLASH
--SO I CAN FINALLY CUT LOOSE!
I OWE YOU CREEPS SOME BRUISES!
WATCH OUT FOR THE JOKER, ROBIN!
ME? I THOUGHT YOU WERE WATCHING OUT FOR HIM!
THE JOKER WATCHES OUT FOR HIMSELF, FOOLS!
'BYE NOW!
THERE! HE'S HEADED FOR THE DOCKS!
SHOULD'VE KNOWN HE'D HAVE PLANNED HIS GETAWAY!
I MAY BE CRAZY, BATMAN --BUT I'M NOT STUPID!
HE WHO FAILS AND RUNS AWAY, LIVES TO WIN ANOTHER DAY!
VROOM!
BLAST HIM--

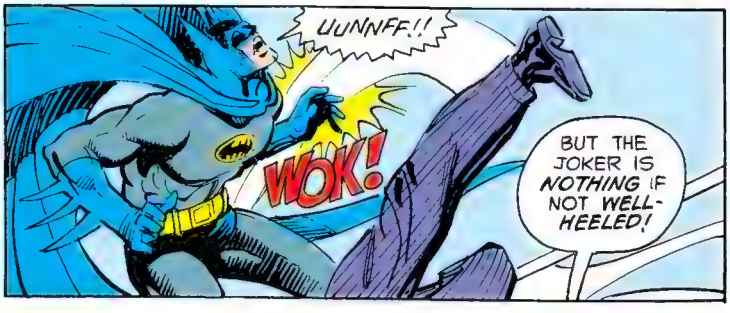
--HE NEVER MAKES IT EASY!


BUT HE HASN'T SPOTTED ME YET--WHICH HELPS!
JUST A LITTLE CLOSER, THEN--

AH, IT'S YOU AGAIN! NEVER GIVE UP, DO YOU?
NOPE! BUT IF YOU'RE SMART, JOKER--
-- YOU WILL!

I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF YOU FOR ONE NIGHT--
OH-- REALLY?
SQUIRSH!


--AND NO ACID-SQUIRTING FLOWERS OR ELECTRIFIED JOY-BUZZERS OR ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN MUSTER IS GOING TO SAVE YOU FROM ME!
MY, WE ARE IN A SNIT, AREN'T WE?


UUNNFF!!
WOK!
BUT THE JOKER IS NOTHING IF NOT WELL-HEELED!

EH? THE BOAT'S OUT OF CONTROL!
WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THOSE SHOALS!

NEXT ISSUE: SELINA KYLE'S LIFE STARTS TO COME APART AT THE SEAMS--WHILE THE CAPED CRUSADER BATTLES **CAPTAIN BOOMERANG!** **"CHAOS--COMING AND GOING!"**

Detective Comics™

STARRING

BATMAN

ALL NEW!
NO. 504
JULY

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

HELLO AND GOODBYE, BATMAN-- YOU WERE DOOMED THE MINUTE YOU WALKED INTO THE JOKER'S PLAYLAND!

PLUS: COMMISSIONER GORDON in a SPECIAL SOLO-STORY!

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE MURDERED BEFORE HIS EYES, ***BRUCE WAYNE*** HAS TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD ***AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...***

BAT MAN

CREATED BY BOB KANE

THE JOKER'S RUMPUS ROOM REVENGE!

YOUR CITY HASN'T CHANGED MUCH IN THE MONTHS SINCE YOU LAST WALKED ITS STREETS.

OH, THERE ARE A FEW NEW BUILDINGS, AND SOME FAMILIAR LANDMARKS ARE NO MORE...

BUT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, GOTHAM CITY IS MUCH AS YOU REMEMBERED IT.

AND, AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY ACROSS A SOOTY ROOFTOP, BENEATH A LEERING BILLBOARD THAT SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT THE CITY'S CURRENT POLITICAL CONCERNS, YOU CANNOT RESIST A SMILE OF JOYFUL ANTICIPATION...

DO YOU WANT THE BATMAN FRIGHTENING YOUR CHILDREN?

HELP STAMP OUT VIGILANTISM

VOTE ARTHUR REEVES FOR MAYOR OF GOTHAM CITY

PAID FOR BY THE COMMIT TO ELECT ARTHUR REEVES

GERRY CONWAY — *writer*
DON NEWTON & DAN ADKINS — *artist*
JOHN COSTANZA — *letterer*
ADRIENNE ROY — *colorist*
PAUL LEVITZ, editor

THE FIRE-ESCAPE'S RUSTING IRON RUNGS ARE BRITTLE AND COLD BETWEEN YOUR FINGERS.

AS YOU CLIMB TOWARD A LIGHTED WINDOW ON THE FLOOR BELOW, YOU MUST SMOTHER A GIGGLE.

HE MUSTN'T KNOW YOU'RE COMING. HE EXPECTS YOU IN AN HOUR OR SO, THIS OLD MAN CROUCHED IN THE LAMPLIT DARKNESS OF HIS TOYSHOP...

...BUT YOU'RE GOING TO SURPRISE HIM.

HARD AT WORK AS *ALWAYS*, EH, PAPETTO?

YOU DESERVE A *REST*.

WHO'S THAT?

OH...IT'S *YOU*. I SUPPOSE YOU'RE HERE FOR THE *LAST* OF YOUR SPECIAL *CONSIGNMENT*.

YOU GAVE ME QUITE A *START*.

THAT'S NOT *ALL* I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU, OLD CHUM.

B-BUT ...THE *TOYS!*

I BUILT THEM ALL TO YOUR *SPECIFICATIONS!*

EVEN THIS *LAST* ONE...

THAT'S JUST THE *PROBLEM*, PAPETTO..

SQUIRT

LIKE THEY SAY, SPORT, *YOU KNOW TOO MUCH!*

AAHAA

ARRRR

CLANG CLANG CLANG

EH? AH YES, THE *TOY*.

YOU SMIRK AND SILENTLY CHIDE YOURSELF FOR ALMOST FORGETTING TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE.

CLANG

CLANG

IT'S QUITE CUTE, REALLY.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO LEAVE YOUR CALLING CARD.

THIS DUTY DONE, YOU SAUNTER TO THE DOOR...

...AND ALLOW YOURSELF A GLEEFUL CHUCKLE AS YOU STROLL OFF INTO THE NIGHT.

ONE HOUR LATER...

WHEN WE SPOKE ON THE *HOTLINE*, COMMISSIONER, YOU SAID YOU HAD SOMETHING THAT WAS "*RIGHT DOWN MY ALLEY*"...

BUT THIS LOOKS LIKE A COMMON *HOMICIDE-ROBBERY.*

THAT'S WHAT MY MEN THOUGHT AFTER THEY CAME HERE ON AN *ANONYMOUS TIP*...

...UNTIL THEY SAW *THAT!*

THAT GHASTLY POST-MORTUM *GRIN*... AND THE *PLAYING CARD*...

...BOTH SIGNS OF *THE JOKER!*

I CALLED *ARKHAM ASYLUM* BEFORE YOU ARRIVED.

HE ESCAPED THREE NIGHTS AGO.

WHY WEREN'T WE *INFORMED?*

DON'T THEY KNOW HE'S A *HOMICIDAL LUNATIC?*

I ASKED THEM THAT SAME *QUESTION.*

APPARENTLY HIS *FILE* WAS LOST-- OR *STOLEN.*

TYPICAL BUREAUCRATIC *FOUL-UP.*

I *PROMISE* YOU, I'LL--

COMMISSIONER GORDON!

ON BEHALF OF THE *CITY COUNCIL*, I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT THAT-- THAT *VIGILANTE* IS DOING HERE, INTERFERING WITH A *POLICE INVESTIGATION!*

WELL, IF IT ISN'T *MAYORAL CANDIDATE ARTHUR REEVES--*

--HERE WITH HIS OWN TAME *TV NEWS CREW.*

NO ONE'S TAMED ME *YET*, BATMAN. COUNCILMAN REEVES ISN'T THE FIRST POLITICIAN WHO'S TRIED TO *MANIPULATE* THE PRESS.

HE WON'T BE THE *LAST*.

NOW, WOULD YOU MIND TELLING US WHY THE POLICE CALLED YOU IN ON THIS CASE?

YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK *COMMISSIONER GORDON*, MISS...

WTYL TV

ORTEGA. OLIVIA ORTEGA, SPOT-LIGHT NEWS.

MISS ORTEGA.

I'M NOT AT *LIBERTY* TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

THAT *FOOT-PRINT*...

...*MUD*, TRACKED IN ON A *BOOT*.

WITH MISS ORTEGA CORNERING *GORDON*, NO ONE'S LOOKING MY WAY--

--TO SEE ME SLIP THIS SAMPLE INTO MY UTILITY BELT.

HOLD IT RIGHT *THERE*, BATMAN.

I SAW YOU TAKE SOMETHING FROM THE *FLOOR*!

I HAVE NEITHER THE *TIME*--

--NOR THE INCLINATION TO EX-PLAIN MYSELF TO YOU, REEVES.

IF YOU WANT A *CAUSE* TO RIDE INTO THE *MAYOR'S MANSION*...

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND IT SOMEWHERE *ELSE*.

I'M *NOT* PLAYING YOUR *GAME*.

GOODBYE, COMMISSIONER.

...AS I WAS *SAYING*, MISS ORTEGA, THE POLICE *WELCOME* THE BATMAN'S ASSISTANCE.

WHAT WE DON'T WELCOME IS NEEDLESS *INTERFERENCE* FROM PUBLICITY-HUNGRY OFFICE-SEEKERS... PRESENT COMPANY *EXCLUDED*, OF COURSE...

AHEM... OF COURSE.

COME BACK HERE, YOU CAPED *MENACE*!

I HAVEN'T FINISHED... *TALKING* TO YOU...

THE NEXT MORNING, CROWDS GATHER AT THE GOTHAM CITY BRANCH OF THE FABULOUS *DALLAS DEPARTMENT STORE*--

--WHOSE PATRONS ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR *WEALTH*--

--AND WHOSE AISLES AND COUNTERS ARE FILLED WITH BAUBLES AS FANTASTIC AS ANY OF THE WONDERS FOUND BY *MARCO POLO* IN THE PLEASURE PALACE OF *KUBLA KHAN*...

DALLAS

AS A *STOCKHOLDER* IN THE *DALLAS CORPORATION*, BRUCE WAYNE WAS EXPECTED TO BE HERE THIS MORNING, FOR THIS *UNVEILING*--

--AND I'M GLAD I'VE *COME*.

--AND SO, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IN HONOR OF OUR *OPENING*, WE'VE HAD THIS *SOLID GOLD TRAIN SET* FLOWN IN FROM *DALLAS*...

THIS IS REALLY QUITE *EXTRAORDINARY*.

WORTH ALMOST *THREE MILLION DOLLARS*, IT IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE MODEL TRAIN IN THE WORLD!

IT'S JUST *INCREDIBLE*.

EH? SOMETHING *ELSE* THAT'S INCREDIBLE... THOSE CLOUDS OF *PINK SMOKE* DRIFTING DOWN FROM THE *CEILING*!

I'VE A HUNCH THEY'RE *NOT* PART OF THE DISPLAY!

THIS *PERFUME-DOUSED* HANDKERCHIEF SHOULD *PROTECT* ME UNTIL I CAN GET THE *NOSTRIL FILTERS* FROM MY UTILITY BELT...

"...BUT NOTHING IS GOING TO PROTECT THE REST OF THE CROWD!

"THEY'RE LAUGHING LIKE *MANIACS*--TOTALLY *HELPLESS*! AND THERE, DROPPING FROM THE *CEILING*, IS THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MADNESS--"

"--THAT LUNATIC HARLEQUIN OF CRIME, *THE JOKER!*"

GREETINGS, ALL.

HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS WHIFF OF *ANESTHETIC* SPRAY.

THE FELLAS WHO MAKE IT TELL ME IT'S A REAL *GAS!*

HA HA HA

HAHAHA! SOMETIMES I *KILL* MYSELF.

AH WELL, TIME TO *SWITCH* TRACKS--

--AND GRAB WHAT I'VE COME FOR!

JOKER!

HO-HO! IF IT ISN'T MY FAVOR-ITE BAT-EARED *BOOBY!*

DON'T *RAIL* AT ME, BATMAN!

I'LL LOSE MY *TRAIN OF THOUGHT!*

THAT *TOY PARACHUTE* HE'S WEARING IS ATTACHED TO A *HARNESS* UP IN THE CEILING!

IT'S PULLING HIM OUT OF MY *REACH!*

NEVER FEAR, OLD CHUM, I PROMISE YOU WE'LL *MEET AGAIN!*

SOONER THAN YOU *THINK*, JOKER...

SOONER THAN YOU THINK!

CAUGHT HIS FOOT WITH MY *BATA-RANG!*

EH? I TUGGED ON THE BATROPE-- BUT HE HASN'T *BUDGED!*

HE CAN'T CARRY MY WHOLE *WEIGHT*-- CAN HE?

NO, HE *CAN'T.*

HE LEFT HIS SHOE BEHIND-- BUT HE'S LONG *GONE.*

HMMM... HIS SHOE ISN'T THE *ONLY* THING HE LEFT.

SOME-THING ABOUT ALL THIS DOESN'T SMELL QUITE *RIGHT...*

THE WAYNE BUILDING STANDS AS A MONUMENT TO WEALTH AND POWER IN *GOTHAM CITY*...

BENEATH IT, HIDDEN FROM PUBLIC VIEW IS *ANOTHER* MONUMENT...

A MONUMENT TO POWER OF A DIFFERENT KIND, LESS OBVIOUS AND MORE INTIMATE! *THE BATCAVE*...

YOUR TEA, MASTER BRUCE.

THANKS, ALFRED. SET IT ON THE TABLE, WILL YOU?

I'LL DRINK IT AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED RUNNING THIS *CHEMICAL ANALYSIS*.

MAY I ASK WHAT YOU'RE ANALYZ-ING, SIR?

OF COURSE, ALFRED.

YOU REMEMBER THAT *MUD SAMPLE* I BROUGHT BACK FROM THE TOYMAKER'S WORKSHOP?

I DO, SIR.

I BELIEVE THAT MUD WAS BROUGHT IN ON THE JOKER'S *BOOT*.

MINERAL ANALYSIS REVEALS HIGH LEVELS OF CERTAIN NATURAL *PHOSPHORS*...

...FOUND IN ONLY TWO AREAS NEAR *GOTHAM CITY*.

LEVITZ TOWN AND *MALCOLMVILLE*.

AS FOR THIS *PARACHUTE* THE JOKER LEFT BEHIND AT THE *DEPARTMENT STORE* HE ROBBED THIS MORNING--

--I NOTICED A *PECULIAR ODOR* WHEN I PICKED IT UP.

PING

THE CHEMICAL ANALYZER IS GOING TO *IDENTIFY* THE SOURCE OF THAT ODOR--

--AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST *FINISHED*.

ACCORDING TO THE *PRINT-OUT*, THE PARACHUTE SHOWS TRACES OF CHEMICAL PRESERVATIVES PRIMARILY USED IN THE MANUFACTURING OF COMMERCIAL-BRAND *ICE CREAM*.

ICE CREAM, SIR?

LET'S SEE WHAT THE *COMMERCIAL BUSINESS INDEX* CAN TELL US ABOUT ANY ICE CREAM FACTORIES IN THE GOTHAM AREA.

BINGO.

THE "HAPPY HUMOR" PLANT IS LOCATED IN MALCOLMVILLE.

THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND THE JOKER!

INDUSTRIAL INDEX OF GREATER GOTHAM AREA

SIR, YOU ASKED ME TO REMIND YOU EARLIER...

...IT'S TIME FOR THE EVENING NEWS.

TURN IT UP, ALFRED.

KNOWING THAT LUNATIC, I HAVE A HUNCH THE JOKER MAY HAVE STRUCK AGAIN.

AS YOU SAY, SIR.

...OLIVIA ORTEGA FOR CHANNEL 8 SPOTLIGHT NEWS.

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING ANOTHER BIZARRE ROBBERY TONIGHT, THIS ONE INVOLVING THE THEFT OF A PRICELESS AND FAMOUS TOY...

...THE ORIGINAL PUFF BEAR, FEATURED IN THE CHRIS REDBREAST STORIES OF A.A. MILNER.

THE DOLL WAS STOLEN FROM A DISPLAY CASE IN MILNER'S HOME EARLIER THIS EVENING--

--AND THE ONLY CLUE LEFT BY THE THIEF WAS THIS PASTEBOARD PLAYING CARD...

HE'S TAUNTING ME, ALFRED. THE MUD, THE PARACHUTE--

--BOTH WERE LEFT DELIBERATELY FOR ME TO FIND.

BUT WHY, SIR?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS, ALFRED?

ALFRED PENNYWORTH'S REPLY IS A WORDLESS NOD.

MOMENTS LATER, THE BATMOBILE ROARS FROM A CONCEALED TUNNEL EXITING ON THE DEAD-END FINGER ALLEY...

...AND TURNS NORTH TOWARD THE TOWN OF MALCOLMVILLE.

BACK IN THE 1930s, A MAN NAMED HAROLD "HAPPY" HUMOR HAD AN IDEA, ONE OF THE *GREAT* IDEAS...

HE WOULD MAKE *ICE CREAM* FOR THE MASSES--

--ICE CREAM IN EVERY FLAVOR IMAGINABLE (*AND SOME THAT WERE UNIMAGINABLE*)--AND HE WOULD SELL THIS ICE CREAM FROM LITTLE WHITE *TRUCKS* ON THE STREETS AND ROADS OF *AMERICA*...

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, HAROLD HUMOR'S *DREAM* WAS A COUNTRY'S *REALITY*.

HAPPY HUMOR ICE CREAM 483 FLAVORS

TIME PASSES, HOWEVER, AND ALL THINGS MUST *CHANGE*.

TODAY, HAROLD HUMOR'S MONUMENT IS A DUSTY FACTORY AND A TIME-CRACKED *STATUE*. HAROLD HIMSELF IS *DEAD*.

TONIGHT, THAT AGING STATUE SERVES THE PURPOSES OF *ANOTHER* VISIONARY... *THE BATMAN*...

MOVEMENT IN THE YARD BELOW.

TWO MEN CARRYING A HEAVY BOX MARKED--*TOYS*?

THAT'S THE *CONNECTION* I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!

TOYS

DID YOU *HEAR* SOMETHING?

UH-HUH. IT CAME FROM THAT *STATUE*.

CHECK IT OUT.

MUST'VE BEEN A *FALSE* ALARM.

I DON'T SEE NO--

THWUNK

DONALD?

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU, BUDDY?

SIMPLE...

...DONALD DIDN'T *DUCK*.

CHUNK

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

MICKEY, DONALD -- WHERE *ARE* YOU GUYS?

SHEESH, LEAVE IT TO *THEM* TO GO OFF AND LEAVE BOXES LYING AROUND.

HORACE, GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS, WILL YOU?

TOYS

WOOF, THIS IS HEAVY.

WHAT'S IN IT, YOU KNOW?

SOMETHING THE *BOSS* ORDERED FOR HIS *RUMPUS ROOM*.

NOW *SHUT UP* AND KEEP *MOVING*.

SILENCE.

THEN...

FOOT-STEPS FADING AWAY... DOOR SHUTTING...

TOYS

...IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO *COME OUT*.

TOYS

WHERE AM I?

TOYS

SUDDEN LIGHT BRINGS AN ANSWER, AS OVERHEAD SPOTS FLARE INTO CUTTING BRILLIANCE --

HALLOOO THERE, CAPED CRUSADER!

GLAD YOU COULD *MAKE* IT TO MY *RUMPUS ROOM!*

THAT *VOICE*--

THE JOKER!

WHO *ELSE?* ALL GOOD JOKERS LIKE TO BE PRESENT AT THE *PUNCH LINE* TO THEIR LITTLE *JESTS*.

CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, I'M ONLY *HUMAN* AFTER ALL.

YOU SHOULD SEE YOUR *FACE*, BATMAN. YOU'RE A *STUDY*.

BUT NOW YOU'VE *REALIZED*--

--ALL MY CRIMES WERE PART OF A PLAN TO *TRAP* YOU IN THIS ROOM.

ALL OF THEM, JOKER--

--INCLUDING THE TOYMAKER'S *MURDER*?

ESPECIALLY THAT, OLD CHUM.

HOW ELSE WAS I TO ASSURE YOUR *INTEREST*?

YOU LUNATIC.

LOOK WHO'S *TALKING*. YOU'RE SO OBSESSED WITH CRIME-FIGHTING, YOU'VE WALKED *BLINDLY* INTO A TRAP THAT--

WHOOPS.

TEMPER, *TEMPER*, BATSIE.

BY *JUMPING* AT ME--

--YOU'VE ACTIVATED A *SPRING-SWITCH* UNDER THE FLOOR-BOARD.

CLIK

NOW WE'LL HAVE TO *FINISH* OUR CONVERSATION AT A *LATER DATE*.

SEE YOU IN *HELL*, BATMAN!

HA HA HA HA

MY GOD!

HA

TWANG!

A JOKER JACK-IN-THE-BOX SAMURAI!

IT'S INSANE-- BUT DEADLY!

SWISSSH

SNIK

STILL, ALL I HAVE TO DO IS *AVOID* ITS SWORD UNTIL I CAN FIND THE EXIT *OUT* OF HERE!

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *THINKING*, BATSIE.

YOU'RE *WRONG*. THAT *JOKER-SAMURAI* ISN'T THE ONLY THREAT TO YOUR WELL-BEING...

MA-MA!

WH-WHAT?

...NO, *INDEEDIE!*

THE *OTHER* TOYS-- *ATTACKING* ME?

NOW I SEE *THE JOKER'S* PLAN...!

KPOW

HEEHEE

MA-MA!

EVERY TOY IN THIS *ROOM* IS DESIGNED FOR *ONE PURPOSE*--

YR-RUM

YRRUM

BWHOOM

--TO *KILL* ME!

AND IF I GIVE THEM HALF A *CHANCE*, THEY *WILL*!

GRR-CHOMP

ARRH!

LEAVE IT TO THE JOKER TO DEVISE A MURDER-PLOT THIS SICK!

HEE-HEE HUP!

KPOW

SPTAK

GOODNESS! THIS IS GETTING A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO HOME!

SLAM!

YOU SMILE, AND CRACKLE WITH DELIGHT AS YOU TURN FROM YOUR "RUMPUS ROOM"...

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW, YOU THINK; THE TOYS THAT OLD FOOL PAPETTO BUILT FOR YOU WILL DO THEIR WORK--

--AND IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, YOUR MOST HATED ENEMY WILL BE DEAD.

THE THOUGHT MAKES YOU SIMPER WITH PLEASURE.

YOUR MEN AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS; YOU TELL THEM TO WARM UP THE VAN FOR AN EARLY DEPARTURE...

...AND THEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR RUMPUS ROOM...

...TO LISTEN OUTSIDE ITS TINY DOOR, FOR THE SOUNDS OF CARNAGE WITHIN.

SMOTHERING A GIGGLE, YOU RESIST AN UNDIGNIFIED URGE TO CAPER.

HEE HEE HEE

HE WAITS FOR THEM, THESE GRINNING LETHAL TOYS--

--EVERY NERVE BURNING, EVERY MUSCLE TAUT WITH ANTICIPATION.

UNNH

CRAK!

WHEN IT COMES, THE ATTACK IS SWIFT AND BRUTAL.

WHAT LOOKS LIKE WOOD IS PAINTED STEEL--

--AND WHAT SEEMS HARMLESS IS AS DEADLY AS A STRIKING COBRA!

ZZZZZT

ELECTRIFIED CYMBALS? SHOCKING ME-- TERRIBLE PAIN!

THEY'RE ALL OVER HIM NOW, SNAPPING AND SLASHING, TINY TEETH TEARING, NEEDLE CLAWS RIPPING...

IT'S A NIGHTMARE! THESE THINGS LATCH ONTO YOU LIKE METAL LEECHES!

EH? COULD THAT BE THE ANSWER?

HEE

HEE

USING ONE SET OF TOYS--AGAINST ANOTHER?

HAHA

HAHA

SILENCE; BLESSED SILENCE.

YOU SMIRK AT THE SILENCE WITHIN THE SEALED-OFF RUMPUS ROOM. YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS.

IT MEANS YOU'VE WON, AT LAST. WITH A CHORTLE, YOU UNLOCK THE DOOR TO PEER WITHIN...

WHAMMO

...AND THE WORLD EXPLODES WITH FIREWORKS!

OH DEAR.

YOU'RE NOT DEAD!

DISAPPOINTED, JOKER?

YOU MADE THE LONG TREK FROM ARKHAM TO THIS ICE CREAM FACTORY FOR NOTHING.

YOU'VE FAILED.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL, BATSIE.

AND I STILL HAVE MY POISON SQUIRT GUN!

YOU NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?

ALMOST MESMERIZED, YOU WATCH THE BATARANG ARC THROUGH SHADOWS TO THE FACTORY'S MAIN CONTROL BOARD...

THUNK!

YOU SEE IT STRIKE A LEVER, ACTIVATING A MACHINE.

OH NO.

SICK WITH FATALISM, YOU LOOK UP...

...JUST IN TIME TO WATCH YOUR *DOOM* COME *POURING DOWN!*

SPLOOSH

ICE CREAM! BLUGGG!

SPUTTUI, SPUTTIFF!

I DON'T *UNDERSTAND* IT, BATMAN! YOU WERE *TRAPPED*--

--LOCKED IN A ROOM WITH *PERFECT KILLING MACHINES!*

THE *JOKER-SAMURAI ALONE* SHOULD HAVE CUT YOU TO *RIBBONS!*

IT *WOULD* HAVE...

...BUT YOU LEFT ME ALL THE TOOLS I *NEEDED* TO RENDER IT *HARMLESS!*

HA HA

"ONCE I REALIZED THAT YOUR KILLER TOYS WERE DESIGNED TO CLAMP THEMSELVES ONTO THEIR VICTIM--

HEE HEE HEE

"--I SIMPLY MADE SURE THEIR VICTIM WAS THE SAMURAI AND NOT ME!"

DRAT! IF *PAPETTO* WEREN'T ALREADY *DEAD*--

--I'D *KILL* HIM FOR THIS!

YOU WON'T BE HURTING *ANYONE* AGAIN, JOKER.

THAT'S A *PROMISE.*

The End

NEXT: *RETURN OF THE WEREWOLF*

TALES of GOTHAM CITY

PAUL KUPPERBERG
WRITER

JOSE DELBO
& JOE GIELLA
ARTISTS

PIERRE BERNARD JR.
LETTERER

CARL GAFFORD
COLORIST

PAUL LEVITZ
EDITOR

REAL PLEASURE HAVIN THE *TOP COP* GRACIN' MY HUMBLE ESTABLISHMENT, COMMISH! CAN I MAKE YOU AN *EGG CREAM*?

YOU'RE REAL *FUNNY*, SUNSHINE--BUT LET'S SEE IF YOU'RE *STILL* LAUGHING WHEN WE FIND YOUR *DRUG FACTORY* IN THE BACK-ROOM!

TV

OKAY, MAN, *LET'S* TALK *SERIOUS!* YOU BUST INTO MY SHOP, HASSLE MY CUSTOMERS, MUMBLIN' BOUT SOME JIVE *DOPE RAP!* YOU GOT A *WARRANT*, COMMISH?

OH, I'VE GOT A WARRANT ALL RIGHT-- *LT. LARSEN!*

AND WE'VE GOT *MORE* THAN THAT--

--WE'VE GOT *THREE MONTHS* OF NARCOTICS DIVISION'S *SURVEILLANCE REPORTS* ON THIS PLACE!

HERE IT IS, SIR!

AND WHAT'S MORE, WE'VE FINALLY GOT *YOU!* YOU'VE BEEN DEALING YOUR *GARBAGE* TO KIDS IN THIS CITY *TOO MANY* YEARS--

-- AND THE *PROCESSING MACHINES* IN THE BACK ARE *ALL* THE EVIDENCE WE *NEED* TO STOP YOU FOR *GOOD!*

SEEMS TO ME YOU'RE LABORIN' UNDER A MISAP-PREHENSION, COMMISH! AIN'T *NO* MACHINES BACK THERE--

POLICE

--AIN'T *NOTHIN'* BACK THERE, MAN!

COMMISSIONER, YOU'D BETTER COME AND *SEE* THIS, SIR... THE BACK ROOM... IT'S--

"--EMPTY!"

WELL, LT. LARSEN? THEY WERE HERE YESTERDAY--NOW THEY'RE *GONE!* WHO WAS ON *SURVEILLANCE* OUTSIDE TODAY?

ER... *ME*, SIR.

IT MUST HAVE TAKEN A *MAJOR* MOVING OPERATION TO CLEAR THE PROCESSORS AND DRUGS FROM HERE-- *NOT* SOMETHING YOU'D BE LIKELY TO *MISS!*

BUT THIS PLACE IS *TOO* CLEAN--LIKE IT WAS SWEPT AND VACUUMED *VERY RECENTLY...*

HMMM... LIKE TO REMOVE *ALL* TRACES OF DRUGS?

YES. SOMETHING TELLS ME SUNSHINE GOT *TIPPED* TO THE RAID IN TIME TO *CLEAN UP!* BUT *HOW* DID HE *KNOW?* AND HOW DID HE GET RID OF THE EVIDENCE OUTRIGHT *UNDER* YOUR NOSE?

LEAVIN' SO *SOON,* COMMISH?

FOR NOW, SUNSHINE--BUT WE'LL BE *BACK!*

ANY TIME, MAN! YOU STILL GOT THAT EGG CREAM COMIN' TO YOU, Y'KNOW.

YOU GOT *LUCKY* THIS TIME. BUT WE'LL GE....

SUSPICION! IT BEGINS AS A TINY SEED--

--THAT GROWS WITH THE SLIGHTEST ATTENTION--

...DAVE? DAVE LARSEN...?

--AND *BLOSSOMS* INTO *FULL FLOWER* UNDER EVEN CLOSER SCRUTINY! AND SO, LATE THAT EVENING...

I'VE KNOWN DAVE LARSEN SINCE HE WAS A *KID* -- HIS FATHER AND I WENT THROUGH THE POLICE ACADEMY TOGETHER--BUT FROM ALL I READ IN HIS FILE, IT'S *POSSIBLE...*

LARSEN COULD BE ON THE TAKE!

THIS AFTERNOON WASN'T HIS *FIRST* CASE THAT'S TURNED ROTTEN--AND THERE ARE *SEVERAL* INSTANCES WHERE HE'D SUDDENLY *FORGOT* VITAL TESTIMONY AT *TRIALS!*

BLAST! THIS IS ALL LESS THAN CIRCUMSTANTIAL--CERTAINLY NOTHING I'D WANT TO TURN OVER TO INTERNAL AFFAIRS!

BUT DAVE WAS IN A POSITION TO WARN SUNSHINE--AND SUNSHINE DID SIGNAL TO HIM...! I OWE IT TO THE DEPARTMENT TO AT LEAST--

"--TALK TO LARSEN."

DRUG PUSHERS AND THEIR FACTORIES ARE A LONG WAY FROM THIS POSH SECTION OF GOTHAM--BUT NOT FROM THE THOUGHTS OF ITS POLICE COMMISSIONER...

PRETTY FANCY BUILDING--ESPECIALLY ON A DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT'S SALARY!

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C-COMMISSIONER!? EH...COME IN, SIR! WHAT, ER... BRINGS YOU HERE, SIR?

EVENING, DAVE. I HAD TO TALK TO YOU--ABOUT THIS AFTERNOON.

YEAH, THAT WAS A, ER, TOUGH BREAK, SIR. WE... WE'LL HAVE TO START ALL OVER AGA...

THAT'S NOT WHAT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT, DAVE.

THE WORDS ARE DIFFICULT TO FIND. JAMES GORDON HAS SEEN DAVE LARSEN GROW FROM BOY TO MAN TO FELLOW COP--THE THIRD GENERATION OF LARSENS IN THE GOTHAM P.D. YES, THE WORDS ARE DIFFICULT, BUT THEY ARE FOUND...

COMMISSIONER...JAMES! GOOD LORD--H-HOW CAN YOU EVEN THINK THAT... YOU'VE KNOWN ME MY WHOLE LIFE!?

THIS ISN'T EASY FOR ME, DAVE, BUT I HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH!

B-BUT BEING ON THE TAKE!? C'MON, YOU KNOW MY DAD--THE CLEANEST COP IN GOTHAM...NEVER SO MUCH AS TOOK AN APPLE FROM A PUSHCART!

YOU'VE **GOT** TO BELIEVE ME, COMMISSIONER -- I...I'M **CLEAN!**

I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

HE'S LYING. I **KNOW** THAT BOY.. AND THAT WAS THE SOUND OF HIM LYING.

MY VISIT **UNNERVED** HIM! DAVE'S **HIDING** SOMETHING AND I **DON'T** NEED FURTHER INVESTIGATION TO TELL ME **WHAT!**

IF I'M RIGHT, HE'S GOING TO TELL SUNSHINE I'M **ON** TO THEM--

--AND HE'S **NOT** GOING TO TRUST HIS PHONE NOW! SO HE'LL PROBABLY HEAD OVER TO SUNSHINE HIMSELF...AHHH!

THE COMMISSIONER DOESN'T STOP TO **CONGRATULATE** HIMSELF ON HIS DEDUCTION--

--PREFERRING **INSTEAD** TO HAVE BEEN PROVEN **WRONG!**

HE'S **NOT.**

BLAST! IT'S **GORDON!**

IT'S TOO LATE TO **TURN BACK** NOW. HE MUST ALREADY **KNOW** WHERE I'M HEADED!

I'VE GOT NO **CHOICE** -- IF I'M GOING TO SAVE MY **OWN** HIDE, I'M GOING TO **HAVE TO SACRIFICE** SUNSHINE'S... AND PRAY GORDON BUYS IT!

KINDA' *LATE* FOR YOU TO BE PAYIN' A *CALL*, AIN'T IT, LARSEN--NOT TO MENTION KINDA' *STUPID!*

IT'S *RISKY*, ALL RIGHT, BUT I *HAD* TO SEE YOU!

WHY? AIN'T *YOUR SHARE* OF THE DRUG TAKE *ENOUGH* FOR YOU?

IT'S *PLENTY*--MAYBE *TOO MUCH!* TIPPING YOU TO THE RAID MAY'VE COST ME EVEN *MORE* THAN *YOU* COULD PAY!

MAN, WHAT *ARE* YOU JAWIN' ABOUT?!

I'M TALKING ABOUT MY *FREEDOM*, SUNSHINE--

--THE COMMISSIONER *KNOWS* I'M ON YOUR PAYROLL!

WHA--? HOW'D HE TUMBLE TO *THAT*, FOOL?!

I DON'T KNOW-- TODAY'S RAID, YOUR *IDIOTIC* HIGH-SIGN...HE PUT *TWO AND TWO* TOGETHER AND CAME UP WITH THE *FACTS!*

THAT'S WHY YOU'LL *UNDER-STAND* WHY I'VE GOT TO *DO THIS!*

WHAT TH...?! YOU GONE *CRAZY*, LARSEN?

GORDON'S *OUTSIDE*. HE *TAILED* ME HERE FROM MY PLACE! BUT WHEN I WALK OUT OF HERE, IT'S GOING TO BE AFTER I *HAVE* TO *SHOOT* YOU FOR *RESISTING ARREST!* DIG?

YEAH, I DIG--YOU KNOW WHERE I GOT THE FACTORY NOW, AND YOU TELL YOUR BOSS YOU FOUND IT, CAME TO BUST ME AND... *BANG, BANG!* RIGHT?

MEANWHILE...

HE'S BEEN INSIDE A LONG TIME! I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* ELSE I NEED TO *CONVINCE* ME.

BLUE Tigers

I MAY AS WELL CALL FOR A *BACK-UP UNIT* AND GO IN...

HUH?!

OH, MISTER *POLICEMAN*, I WOULDN'T DO NOTHIN' LIKE CALLIN' FOR HELP--'SPECIALLY IF YOU *LIKE* HAVIN' YAH HEAD *STAY* ON YER *SHOULDERS!*

MAN, YOU CRAZY! YOU KILL US AN'...

--AND THE DEPARTMENT 'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO PIN ANYTHING ON ME! WELL, THE PARTNERSHIP'S BEEN PROFITABLE, SUNSHINE--

--BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S TIME TO DISSOLVE THE CORPORATION ...HUH?!

HEY, SUN-SHINE! LOOKIT WHO I FOUND SNOOPIN' AROUND OUTSI...! HEY!

SHOOT, JAKE--DON'T YOU WORRY NONE 'BOUT THIS TURKEY--

UGH!

--HE'S EASY!

NOW IS THE TOUGH PART...WHATD' WE DO WITH THESE DUDES?

HEY, SUNSHINE, THEY KNOW TOO MUCH! WE GOT-TA ICE 'EM!

DON'T BE STUPID, SUNSHINE-- I'M THE POLICE COMMISSIONER--

--YOU KILL ME AND EVERY LAW ENFORCE-MENT AGENCY IN THE COUNTRY WILL BE AFTER YOU! LET US GO AND...

NO WAY, JOSE! YOU AN' THE FACTORY'S GOTTA GO, BABY--AN' FAST! JAKE, GET ME SOME ROPE!

AN' LUCKY ME IF YOU DON'T BOTH HAPPEN TO BE UNDER THE SAME ROOF! COINCIDENCES LIKE THAT SAVE ME LOTSA' SCRATCH ON THINGS LIKE THIS--

--BOMBS!

ALLS I GOTTA DO IS PLANT THIS SUCKER NEXT TO THE *BOILER*...AN' IN *FIVE MINUTES* IT'S *BYE BYE* COMMISH AN' *EX*-PARTNER LARSEN! HANG LOOSE, BROTHERS!

SUNSHINE! YOU *MANIAC*... WHAT ABOUT THE *PEOPLE* LIVING IN THIS BUILDI...! *BLAST!*

H-HE'S REALLY GOING TO *KILL* US!

WHAT DID YOU *THINK* HE'D DO? NOW *SHUT UP*, LARSEN--I'LL DEAL WITH YOU *LATER!*

LATER?! Y-YOU THINK THERE'S G-GOING TO *BE* A LATER WHEN THAT *BOMB* GOES OFF?!?

I *HAVE* TO GET OUT OF THIS--IF *ONLY* TO BE ABLE TO *CLEAN* THE DEPARTMENT OF *CROOKED COPS* LIKE YOU... *AH!*

HEY! HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU...?

JUST A LITTLE *TRICK* INVOLVING MUSCLE CONTROL I PICKED UP FROM AN OLD FRIEND! NOW *MOVE IT*, LARSEN--

--WE'VE GOT TO *EVACUATE* THE BUILDING... AND *FAST!*

A-ARE YOU *CRAZY?!* THAT BOMB'S GOING T-TO *BLOW* ANY *SECOND!*

BLAST IT, LARSEN... *LISTEN TO ME--*

--YOU *STARTED* THIS INSANITY AND, BY GOD, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE *GOOD* FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

YOUR FATHER MUST BE TURNING IN HIS GRAVE!

YEAH, *MY FATHER--* *MR. CLEAN!* HE'S A *LEGEND* ON THE FORCE.... HAVE *YOU* EVER TRIED TO *LIVE UP* TO A LEGEND?

NO! *NO WAY--* I-I'M GETTING *OUT OF HERE!*

LARSEN!

BLAST THAT YOUNG FOOL! WE'LL GET HIM LATER--BUT FIRST...

BLAM BLAM

GET OUT! THERE'S A BOMB IN THE BUILDING!

EMERGENCY EXIT

AS PRECIOUS SECONDS TICK BY, COMMISSIONER GORDON WORKS *FEVERISHLY* TO EVACUATE THE TENEMENT--

--WHILE DAVE LARSEN FINDS THERE IS *NO ESCAPE*...

T-THE STAIRS LEAD ME... *WHERE?!* OH, LORD, I'VE *GOT* TO FIND MY WAY *OUT*--

--*BEFORE* THAT... *BOMB!*

TICK TICK TICK

HE SEES THE BUNDLE OF EXPLOSIVES AND *FREEZES!* AND *THEN*, SIMPLE *FEAR*--

--TURNS TO *BLIND PANIC!*

DAVE LARSEN DOES NOT STOP TO *THINK*--NOR DOES HE SEEK TO DO ANYTHING BUT SAVE HIS OWN LIFE, AND...

TICK TICK

...HE CANNOT DO EVEN *THAT!*

CLUNK!

THE BOMB'S EFFECT--*AWAY* FROM THE VOLATILE *BOILER*--IS RELATIVELY *MINOR*--

--BUT THERE IS *ONE* CASUALTY--

DAVE!

KRAK-OOOM!

LATER...

COMMISSIONER! SUNSHINE'S BEEN *CAPTURED* AT THE AIRPORT AND HE CLAIMS LT. LARSEN WAS ON *HIS PAYROLL!* ANY COMMENT, SIR?

NO...NO COMMENT--

--EXCEPT DAVE LARSEN DIED... IN THE LINE OF DUTY...

TV

END.

DC
Wonder Woman
50¢
ALL NEW!
NO. 280
JUNE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SECOND SENSATIONAL FEATURE!
THE HUNTRESS BATTLES LIONMANE!
ENTER: THE DEMON!
BUT HAS HE COME TO SAVE THE AMAZING AMAZON--OR SLAY HER?
A PLAGUE OF MONSTERS!
ANDRU & GIORDANO
C-596

ARRGHH

I WANT DA *SECRET,* HUNTRESS-- THE SECRET OF *FAGAN'S WOOD.*

C'MON--DO I GOTTA *CHOKE* IT OUTTA YOU?

LIONMANE... HIS NAME COMES ROARING UP FROM THE CROWD OF *CONVICTS.*

LIONMANE... HE LED THEM IN A *JAILBREAK* SO SUCCESSFUL THAT THEY NOW *CONTROL* GULL'S ISLAND *PRISON.*

LIONMANE... CAN ONE WOMAN POSSIBLY TRANSFORM HIM INTO A MERE...

LION at bay

PAUL LEVITZ & JOE STATON
Storytellers

STEVE MITCHELL
Inker

ADRIENNE ROY
colorist

JOHN COSTANZA
letterer

LEN WEIN
Editor

UMFFHH-- THIS ONE-ON-ONE WITH LIONMANE IS GETTING A BIT OUT OF HAND, SO...

...LET'S MAKE IT A ONE-OFF-ONE!

KTHUMP

OFFFFF!

HE'S JUST AS TOUGH AS MOTHER SAID HE WAS. IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO EVEN THE SCORE FOR HER.

BUT I HAVE TO PAY HIM BACK FOR THAT NIGHT...

SO PRETTY YOU ARE, MY PRECIOUS PURRFECT JEWELS.

WHAT A SHAME IT IS TO BURY YOU AWAY HERE IN FAGAN'S WOOD, SIMPLY BECAUSE SOME POOR STUPID POLICEMEN ARE LOOKING FOR YOU.

I GOT A BETTER IDEA, CATWOMAN.

PURRHAPS I'M HEARING THINGS.

COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE SAID SOMETHING, LIONMANE?

YEAH.

ME AND DA BOYS HERE, WE'RE TIRED OF TAKIN' YER ORDERS, LADY. YER TOO SOFT FER US.

I'M TAKIN' OVER DIS--

HUNH?

SSNAP

THAT'S ENOUGH, LIONMANE.

YOU'RE JUST HIRED HELP-- THIS IS MY MOB!

Z

NOT NO MORE, IT AIN'T. NOW GIMME THAT--

MY CAT-O'-NINE-TAILS!

SKRATCHH

NO CLAWS EITHER, LADY!

WHATSAMATTA, CATWOMAN? DON'T LIKE HOW I'M GRABBING YOU?

TOUGH.

HSSTT

NOOOOO! GAS! IT'S A TRI...

"MOM GOT HIM WITH A CATNAP-GAS BOMB SHE HAD HIDDEN IN HER LAPELS TO USE AGAINST BATMAN.

"AS I REMEMBER, SHE SAID SHE NEVER HAD ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH HER CREW AFTER SHE LEFT LIONMANE TRUSSED UP FOR THE POLICE.

"BUT IT WAS A LONG TIME BEFORE SHE RECOVERED FROM THE BEATING LIONMANE GAVE HER THAT NIGHT IN FAGAN'S WOOD...

"... AND MAYBE TONIGHT I CAN EVEN THE SCORE."

3

IF I CAN KEEP HIM FROM *MANGLING* ME, THAT IS!

HOLD *STILL*, WOMAN!

GOTCHA!

RRIP

THERE! NOW YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PULL NO *TRICKS* WIT' YER TOY *DART-GUN.*

BUT SINCE YA LIKE TA PLAY GAMES, *HERE'S* ONE--

CATCH!

UHHH...

MEANWHILE...

THERE I WAS, IN THE *MIDDLE* OF IT ALL, AND NOW I'M ONLY *WATCHING* FROM THE *SIDELINES*... SAFE ON *SHORE.*

HELENA SENT ME *HOME*, LIKE I WAS "*LITTLE HARRY*" ON MY MOMMY'S *KNEE.*

I CAN'T *SEE* A BLASTED THING.

DAMN.

4

NOT THAT I HAVE ANY *BUSINESS* THERE AS *DISTRICT ATTORNEY*, OF COURSE.

BUT I SORT OF HOPED HELENA MIGHT HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE ME FIGHTING AT HER *SIDE*.

INSTEAD I GUESS SHE THOUGHT SHE HAD TO *PROTECT* ME.

SO MUCH FOR THE *PROTECTIVE MAN* IMAGE.

I HAVE A LOT OF *ADJUSTING* LEFT TO DO TILL I GET USED TO HELENA BEING THE *HUNTRESS*.

RIGHT, MY LITTLE FEATHERED FRIEND?

CHEER UP.

OH... *HI*. I DIDN'T *SEE* YOU THERE.

FOR A MOMENT, NO *ANSWER* COMES FROM THE MAN IN THE DRIPPING OVERCOAT--

--AND BEFORE IT DOES, A *ROAR* FROM GULL'S ISLAND DROWNS OUT ALL OTHER SOUNDS...

KCHUCK

ARRROOO

5

THERE IS BLOOD IN THEIR EYES, HATE BURNING IN DESPERATE MEN.

A PART OF EACH OF THEM KNOWS THERE'S NO WAY TO **ESCAPE**, EVEN THOUGH THEY PRETEND TO BE FREE!

ANOTHER PART WANTS TO KILL THEIR FORMER CAPTORS, EVEN IF IT COSTS THEM THEIR ONLY HOPE.

A FINAL PART OF THEM SIMPLY NEEDS TO STRIKE OUT... AT SOME-THING!

AND THEN EVERY EYE TURNS, BECKONED LIKE VULTURES TO A CORPSE BY THE BATTLE BELOW...

LURED BY A VIOLENCE THAT MIRRORS THEIR SOULS, A HATE THEY CAN SMELL IN THE AIR...

YA SAID YA KNEW THE SECRET OF FAGAN'S WOOD, WOMAN--WHERE DID CATWOMAN DITCH THE JEWELS?

SHE MUSTA HID THEM SOMEWHERE-- UFF!

WHOMP

TALK, WOMAN-- AN' MAYBE I'LL KILL YA QUICK.

6

THE CROWD IN THE COURTYARD IS **SILENT**-- RASPY BREATHS IN THE CHILL NIGHT AIR ARE THE ONLY HARMONY FOR THE STACCATO POUNDING OF FISTS AND A ONE SYLLABLE COMMAND:

TALK!

BUT ONE WOMAN HEARS SOMETHING **MORE**...

...SOMETHING THAT ISN'T THERE...

Y-YES,,, M-MOTHER...

...OR IS IT?

KRUNCH

SHE REACHES, STRAINING WITH MUSCLES THAT HAVE NO **STRENGTH** LEFT IN THEM... AND SUDDENLY, IT'S OVER...

THE SCORE'S *EVEN*, MOM.

...AND JUST AS SUDDENLY, THE SILENCE **BREAKS**...

FREEZE! THE FIRST MAN TO REACH FOR A *WEAPON* WILL BE SO MUCH *SWISS CHEESE!*

YOU *OKAY*, HUNTRESS?

I'LL *LIVE*. I TAKE IT THE DISTRACTION *WORKED*.

GOTHAM SWAT

7

ONE LONG CLEAN-UP LATER...

MOVE ALONG, CREEPS. WE'RE GONNA GET YOU ALL BACK IN YOUR NICE LITTLE PENS BY *DAYBREAK*...

...AFTER ALL, THERE ARE NEW *LICENSE PLATES* JUST WAITING TO BE MADE.

GOTHAM SWAT

NOW THAT EVERYTHING'S IN HAND, WARDEN, I WONDER IF YOU'D MIND GIVING ME A *LIFT* BACK TO THE MAINLAND IN ONE OF THE *POLICE LAUNCHES*...

I'M AFRAID THE ONLY *SWIMMING* I COULD HANDLE WOULD END UP BEING THE *DEAD MAN'S FLOAT.*

SWAT

CERTAINLY, HUNTRESS. I ONLY WISH WE COULD DO *MORE* FOR YOU.

AFTER ALL, THANKS TO YOU, LIONMANE'S LITTLE *REVOLUTION* IS OVER, AND WE'VE GOTTEN BACK ALL OUR *PRISONERS*...

GPD

"...EXCEPT *ONE.*"

AND ON A PARK BENCH NEAR GOTHAM HARBOR, HARRY SIMS SITS... SMILING THE UNHOLY SMILE OF THE DEAD.

NEXT: ALWAYS LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING

FEATURING THE TERRIFYING RETURN OF... AW, YOU GUESSED!

DC
50¢
ALL NEW!
NO. 281
JULY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE DEATH-DEALING DEMON!
Wonder Woman™
And The HUNTRESS™
VS. THE Joker™
THIS TIME HE'S MINE!
ANDRU & GIORDANO
JOKER
WANTED!!
JOKER

EVERY PRISONER WHO WAS PART OF THE GULL'S ISLAND JAILBREAK HAS BEEN *RECAPTURED*... EXCEPT *ONE*.

WHY, OF *ALL* THE POSSIBLE PRISONERS, DID IT HAVE TO BE *THAT* ONE...

...AND OUT OF A WHOLE *CITY* FULL OF POTENTIAL VICTIMS, WHY DID HE PICK ON *HARRY SIMS*!?

ALWAYS LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING

MURPHY'S LAW, MAYBE, MA'M?

ANYTHING THAT *CAN* GO WRONG, *WILL*...

MAYBE, SARGE, BUT THAT'S ONE HECKUVA *DEPRESSING* WAY TO LOOK AT LIFE.

I ONLY HOPE HARRY *LIVES* LONG ENOUGH TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT HE *AGREES* WITH YOU!

PAUL LEVITZ and JOE STATON storytellers
STEVE MITCHELL inker

ADRIENNE ROY colorist
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
LEN WEIN editor

THE DOCTORS FEEL IT'S LIKELY THAT DISTRICT ATTORNEY SIMS WILL *RECOVER*--

--IT'S JUST THAT THEY CAN'T MAKE ANY *PROMISES*, MISS.

I'M NOT *LOOKING* FOR PROMISES.

I CALL MYSELF *THE HUNTRESS*, NURSE, AND I INTEND TO *LIVE UP* TO MY NAME.

P-PLEASE *DON'T* OPEN THAT WINDOW...

SORRY...

...BUT IT'S NOT A LITTLE *COLD NIGHT AIR* THAT'S ENDANGERING HARRY'S LIFE.

IT'S THAT BLASTED *POISON* IN HIS BLOOD!

GOTHAM CI HOSPIT

WHY... THAT'S *ALL* I WANT TO KNOW, LORD... *WHY?*

ONE PRISONER ESCAPED...WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE *THE JOKER!?!*

SOME NIGHTS IT LOOKS LIKE DAWN WILL *NEVER* COME.

AND HOW IN HELL'S NAME DID THAT *RAVING LOON* GET AHOLD OF ENOUGH *JOKER-VENOM* TO USE ON A GOTHAM D.A. HE'S *NEVER MET*...

...LESS THAN AN *HOUR* AFTER HE BROKE FREE!

2

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU WAIT LONG ENOUGH, IT ALWAYS *DOES.*

...AT LEAST *SO FAR.*

AND A LONG SHADOW OF A BAT FALLS LIGHTLY OVER THE SNOWBOUND CITY, THEN DISAPPEARS...

AHEM. AS YOU KNOW, THESE ARE THE OFFICES OF *CRANSTON, GRAYSON AND WAYNE...* A FIRM WE'RE PROUD TO SAY IS THE *LEADING* PUBLIC INTEREST LAW FIRM IN GOTHAM.

TOGETHER, WE'LL *KEEP* IT THAT WAY.

NAME'S *ARTHUR CRANSTON,* SENIOR PARTNER, SECOND GENERATION OF MY FAMILY IN THE FIRM.

YOU'RE ALL *NEW*-- DON'T EVEN *KNOW* EACH OTHER--

--INTRODUCE YOURSELVES.

TYLER J. VAN DYNE, HARVARD LAW--PRODUCT SAFETY'S MY SPECIALTY.

FRANCES DeVITO, COLUMBIA-- I PREFER TO FOCUS ON CONSUMER FRAUD CASES.

BULLOCK, CHARLES BULLOCK, BROOKLYN LAW.

I'VE COME ON TO HANDLE LITIGATION.

IF WE'RE TO BE A SMOOTHLY-WORKING *TEAM,* YOU'LL NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT EACH OTHER... IT'S *VITALLY IMPORTANT* TO YOUR COLLEAGUES...

FOR EXAMPLE, YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH A LAWYER WHO IS *BRILLIANT* AND ALMOST ALWAYS *LATE*--

AH, *GOOD DAY, HELENA.*

SORRY, ARTHUR.

NO *TROUBLE.*

YOU'VE MERELY *CONFIRMED* MY STATEMENTS.

HMMM... I'M NOT SURE *WHAT* I'VE CONFIRMED, COUNSELLOR, SO CAN WE *TABLE* THE MOTION FOR THE *MOMENT?*

AS THE *JUNIOR* PARTNER IN CRANSTON, GRAYSON AND WAYNE, I'D LIKE TO BE *FORMALLY INTRODUCED* TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATES.

AND THEN WE CAN GET TO *WORK!*

3

MIDNIGHT...

THERE'S SOMETHING FUNDAMENTALLY *BACKWARDS* ABOUT LIVING A *DOUBLE LIFE*... EATING A CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST OF TEA AND CROISSANTS WHILE MOST PEOPLE ARE *ASLEEP*.

DUMB.

BUT IF I DON'T FIGURE OUT SOME SORT OF *PLAN* FOR TRACKING DOWN THE JOKER, I'LL FEEL EVEN *DUMBER*.

NO SIGN OF HIS CRAZINESS ALL *NIGHT*...

...AND BASED ON HIS *RECORD*, THAT WHITE-FACED CLOWN CAN VANISH FOR *WEEKS*.

WHICH LEAVES ME PRECISELY *NOWHERE!*

NO *CLUES*, NO LOGIC BEHIND THE ACTIONS OF MY QUARRY, AND NOT MUCH CHANCE OF A GOOD NIGHT'S *SLEEP*.

SO, I MIGHT AS WELL JUST GET DRESSED AND *VISIT HARRY*-- NOT THAT HE'LL EVEN KNOW I'M *THERE*, IN THAT VENOM-INDUCED *COMA*.

NOOO... WAIT A SECOND.

I ALMOST FORGOT THIS *DRESS* I GOT FOR CHRISTMAS--

--AND THE MAN WHO *GAVE* IT TO ME!

4

AND A FEW HOURS LATER...

AHEM-- EXCUSE ME, COMMISSIONER O'HARA-- THERE'S A *LADY* HERE TO SEE YOU.

SAYS SHE'S A FRIEND.

BY *ALL* MEANS, SEND HER IN, O'FLYNN...

GPD

HELENA WAYNE IS MUCH *MORE* THAN A FRIEND.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, "*UNCLE.*"

AW, NOW THAT'S A *GOOD* LITTLE GIRL WHO REMEMBERS TO CALL THE MAN WHO GAVE HER HER *FIRST* TEDDY BEAR "*UNCLE.*"

AN' YOU *REMEMBER* THE TEDDY WAS *NAMED* AFTER A *POLICE COMMISSIONER*, DON' YOU?

NATURALLY.

YOU ONLY TOLD ME THE STORY *FIFTY* TIMES.

YEAH, WELL, THERE AIN'T A LOT A POLICE *SERGEANT* KNOWS TO TALK TO A *BABY GIRL* ABOUT.

EVEN IF SHE WAS THE *PRETTIEST* BABY HE'D EVER LAID HIS IRISH EYES ON.

KRAK

AWWPP

THUNK

O'HARA!

WH-WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *COMMISSIONER?*

HE'S BEEN HIT BY ONE OF THE *JOKER'S VENOM DARTS*-- GET HIM TO A *HOSPITAL*--*FAST!*

5

I'M GOING JOKER-HUNTING!

I WAS GOING TO ASK O'HARA FOR ANY HINTS HE MIGHT REMEMBER FROM *DAD'S* BATTLES WITH THE JOKER, BUT THIS IS AN EVEN *BETTER* LEAD!

WITH QUICK TREATMENT, O'HARA CAN PROBABLY BE *CURED* IN DAYS--

--AND IF I HAD TO *PICK* A SPOT OUT OF ALL OF GOTHAM CITY TO TAKE ON THE *JOKER*--

KRUNCH

--THIS IS IT!

I KNOW THE AREA AROUND POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS LIKE I WAS *BORN* HERE... SINCE I PRACTICALLY *WAS!*

COME ON *OUT*, JOKER.

THOSE *WATER TANKS* ARE THE *ONLY* PLACE YOU COULD HAVE *FIRED* THAT DART FROM.

NO ANSWER-- *AMAZING.*

I ALWAYS HEARD YOU WERE A *TALKATIVE FELLOW.*

SZZZPP

AH, *THAT'S* MORE LIKE IT.

BUT YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK YOU'D *GET* ME WITH THAT DART, DID YOU?

6

PTOING PTOING PTOING PTOING

CAREFUL, GIRL-- ONE DART YOU CAN DODGE-- FOUR YOU'D BETTER DUCK.

WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT THE JOKER WAS COUNTING ON, IT SEEMS.

BUT IT WON'T GIVE HIM ENOUGH OF A HEAD START TO MATTER.

HOLD IT, YOU POISON-HAPPY LUNATIC!

YOU'RE GOING STRAIGHT BACK TO JAIL--

--NOW!

HEH HEH HEH... SURELY YOU JEST, YOUNG LADY...

OH... HEE HEE... HEE... HEE... I FORGOT... THAT'S WHAT I DO--

--ISN'T IT, DEARIE?

YEOW--THAT VENOM DART JUST POPPED OUT OF HIS SLEEVE!

HEH HEH HEH-- DIDN'T EXPECT IT, DID YOU? A GOOD PUNCH LINE ALWAYS IS SUCH A SURPRISE.

AND I AM SO GLAD YOU FELL FOR IT.

YOU'RE NEW AT THIS, DEARIE--OH, SO DELIGHTFULLY NEW--AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

BUT WHEN YOU SEE YOUR FRIENDS AGAIN, YOU CAN TELL THEM YOU HAD THE RARE AND TRULY WONDERFUL PRIVILEGE OF ALMOST BEING KILLED... BY THE JOKER.

TA.

BY THE TIME I PULL MYSELF TOGETHER, THE JOKER WILL HAVE DISAPPEARED THROUGH ANY OF A DOZEN EXITS FROM THAT WAREHOUSE.

LET ME PULL THIS BLASTED DART OUT OF MY CAPE AND THEN I CAN CHECK THIS TRAIL FOR CLUES.

HMM... BUT FIRST, THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE I THINK I HAVE TO DO.

KRAK

I'M GOING TO NAIL THAT MADMAN'S HIDE TO A PRISON WALL, BUT I'LL GO TO BLAZES BEFORE DOING IT WITH A DART-FIRING CROSSBOW AFTER SEEING WHAT HE DOES WITH DARTS.

FOR THIS ONE, THE GLOVES COME OFF!

NEXT: "FIRST LAUGH..."

8

50¢
ALL NEW!
NO. 282
AUG.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Wonder Woman
NOT EVEN THE DEMON CAN SAVE THE AMAZON FROM THE FURY OF A MAN-BULL BERSERK!
MAYHEM MEANS THE MINOTAUR!
THE DIABOLICAL JOKER IS BACK--
--AND HE'S GOT THE HARD-HITTING HUNTRESS HANGING BY HER THUMBS!
BUCKLER & GIORDANO

FIRST LAUGH...

SEVEN MILLION *PEOPLE* OUT THERE... SEVEN MILLION HAPPY, *NORMAL* PEOPLE... AND *ONE* DERANGED, LAUGHING *KILLER*.

I KNOW IT'S LIKE LOOKING FOR A *NEEDLE* IN THE WORLD'S *LARGEST* HAYSTACK--

--BUT WHY DO I FEEL THAT THE JOKER COULD *KILL* ALL SEVEN MILLION OF GOTHAM'S INNOCENTS BEFORE I *FIND* HIM?

PAUL LEVITZ & JOE STATON, *storytellers*
STEVE MITCHELL *inker*
ADRIENNE ROY, *colorist*
JOHN COSTANZA, *letterer*
LEN WEIN, *editor*

THERE'S NO *PATTERN*, NO *CLUES*...

ONLY *HARRY* LYING COMATOSE IN A HOSPITAL BED, *COMMISSIONER O'HARA* FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE...

...AND ONE VERY SCARED *CITY*.

NOT TO MENTION A LADY CRIMEFIGHTER WHO FEELS *INEFFECTIVE* ENOUGH TO CONSIDER LOOKING FOR A *NEW LINE OF WORK!*

YEESH!

WELL, MAYBE IF I CAN'T FIND THE *JOKER* I CAN TAKE THE STING OUT OF HIS *VENOM!*

THE LIGHTS FLASH WILDLY, THE MUSIC SCREAMS, AND THE VERY AIR SEEMS THICK NOT SIMPLY WITH SMOKE BUT WITH EXPECTATIONS...

...IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S GETTING CLOSE TO CLOSING TIME AT EVE'S APPLE, GOTHAM'S SWINGINGIEST SINGLES' BAR...

I TOLD YOU, CHARLIE, I DON'T WANNA GET *INTO* THAT STUFF. IT'S *TOO HEAVY* FOR ME.

BUT, BABY--

--HOW CAN YOU BE *SURE* UNLESS YOU GIVE IT A TR--

TAP TAP TAP

THE LADY'S *RIGHT* NOT TO TRY YOUR GARBAGE, CHARLIE... AND YOU *KNOW* IT.

2

WHAT THE BLAZES MAKES THIS ANY OF *YOUR* BUSINESS, YOU LOUD-MOUTHED B--

OH NO.

H...HELLO, HUNTRESS.

HELLO, CHARLIE. I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU *LAST* TIME I BUSTED YOU THAT IF THE JUDGE WAS SOFT ENOUGH TO LET YOU *OUT*, YOU'D BETTER *STAY CLEAN*...

...OR I'D PUT YOU RIGHT BACK *BEHIND BARS* AGAIN.

B-BUT I-I DIDN'T *MEAN*--

COME OFF IT, CHARLIE. EVERY OUNCE OF *ILLEGAL DRUGS* IN GOTHAM TRIES TO CRAWL ITS WAY INTO YOUR SLIMY POCKETS.

THE *WORST* PART IS, I THINK YOU *LIKE* THAT FILTH!

URK.

WELL, CHARLIE, HERE'S A *GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY* TO HELP PAY BACK SOCIETY.

JUST TELL ME IF ANY *DI-METHYL-SILICATE* HAS CHANGED HANDS LATELY.

YOU *KNOW* IT, CHARLIE--THAT'S THE *POISON* THE JOKER MAKES HIS *SMILE VENOM* FROM.

NO--NO, I *TOLD* YOU, HUNTRESS -- I'M *OUT* OF THE EXOTIC DRUG RACKET.

SURE, *SURE* YOU ARE, CHARLIE.

TELL ME *ANOTHER* ONE SOMETIME.

HEY, YOU CAN'T ROUGH ME UP LIKE THIS, HUNTRESS-- IT AIN'T *LEGAL*!

CHARLIE-- BE *QUIET*.

3

YEOW!

RRIPPP

OH NO--THAT CRAZY DAME'S KNIFE SLICED MY *POCKET* OPEN!

MY *STASH!*

AHEM--LOOKS LIKE THE GUY WHO RAN OUT INTO THE STREET SCREAMING ABOUT SOMETHING *GOING DOWN* HERE WAS *RIGHT*, FRED.

YEP, SURE *DOES*, SANDY.

AND I SEE AN *OLD FRIEND* OF OURS HERE, TOO.

BACK IN THE *PILL BUSINESS*, CHARLIE?

AWWWW...

A FEW HOURS LATER, AS DAWN BREAKS OVER GOTHAM...

ALL THE PUSHERS WHO HANDLE EXOTIC DRUGS DIDN'T *BLINK* AT THE SOUND OF THE JOKER'S NAME!

WHICH MEANS THAT WHITE-FACED LUNATIC IS WORKING OFF AN *OLD SUPPLY* HE SQUIRRELED AWAY SOMEWHERE--

--OR THERE'S A *PIPELINE* I CAN'T *FIND*.

EITHER WAY IT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR *THE HUNTRESS* TO CALL IT A NIGHT--

4

"--AND HELENA WAYNE TO GO TO WORK."

CAN WE SEE YOU, MS. WAYNE?

OF COURSE, TYLER... COME ON IN.

TYLER, CHARLIE AND I WERE *THINKING*, HELENA--THIS IS A *PUBLIC INTEREST* LAW FIRM, RIGHT?

WELL, WHY DON'T WE APPROACH THE PUBLIC *DIRECTLY*-- TAKE OUT *ADS*-- AND TRY AND GATHER SOME DATA ON *PRODUCT SAFETY*?

GET THEM TO COME TO US INSTEAD OF GOING TO *THEM*.

HMMM... *INTERESTING* IDEA, FRANCES, BUT I SEE SOME *PROBLEMS*.

OFFHAND I'D SAY IT WOULD BE A PRETTY *BIASED* SAMPLING, STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, BECAUSE PEOPLE WHO HAD TROUBLE WITH A PRODUCT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO *COMPLAIN*.

TRUE, BUT CAN WE TRY AND THINK IT THROUGH *SOME MORE*?

SURE...

BUT *NOT* RIGHT NOW, OKAY? I'VE GOT AN IDEA OF MY *OWN* I WANT TO WORK ON.

GREAT--WHAT CAN WE DO TO *HELP*?

NOTHING--THIS IS A *PERSONAL* PROBLEM I'M WORKING ON, TEAM.

IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* ME...

YOU KNOW, SOME DAYS I THINK WE'RE WORKING FOR AN AWFULLY CRAZY LADY!

FIVE MINUTES LATER...

SCREEEECH

NOW ALL THREE OF THE FIRM'S NEW ASSOCIATES THINK I'VE GONE *NUTS*. BUT WHAT THE *HEY*--

5

HEY, LADY-- WATCH IT!

SCREEE

--I WANT TO PUT THEIR IDEA TO CONSTRUCTIVE USE-- FAST!

NEARLY SIDESWIPED THAT TRUCK! I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL.

THESE ROADS ARE WHERE I LEARNED HOW TO DRIVE YEARS AGO--I SHOULD BE ABLE TO STEER THEM BLINDFOLDED--

--BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO TRY IT THAT WAY!

WOW... IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN BACK HERE.

EVERY TREE BRINGS TO MIND A MEMORY.

HMPH-- I WONDER IF THAT OLD OAK STILL HAS MY INITIALS CARVED IN IT!

THE GATE STILL SWINGS WIDE FOR THE ELECTRONIC KEY-- AND SLAMS SHUT FAST. THAT'S GOOD.

LOOKS LIKE THE PLACE IS IN GOOD REPAIR.

UH-HUH... WAYNE MANOR, YOU SURE ARE A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.

THIS IS ONE LITTLE GIRL WHO'S HAPPY TO GO HOME AGAIN...

...'SPECIALLY WHEN THE ANSWER TO ALL MY PROBLEMS WITH THE JOKER LIES INSIDE!

IT'S ABOUT TIME I THOUGHT OF DOING THIS!

6

THE OLD KEY RATTLES NOISILY IN THE DOOR, SQUEAKING IN TUNE WITH THE LOCK CYLINDERS AND THE BRASS HINGES... A SYMPHONY OF DISUSE.

THEY CALL OUT TO HELENA WAYNE, CHIDING HER..."HOW COULD YOU GO AWAY AND LEAVE US SO ALONE?"

THE LIGHT THAT POURS THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE STATELY MANSE IS THE FIRST TO TOUCH ITS DUSTY HALLS IN MANY MONTHS.

THE LIGHTS WENT OUT AFTER BRUCE WAYNE DIED, AND HELENA HAS NOT COME BACK TO REKINDLE THEM.

NOT UNTIL TODAY.

PERHAPS IT WAS THE MEMORIES SHE COULD NOT BEAR... THE PLACES WHERE HER FATHER HAD LAUGHED THAT RARE, DEEP LAUGH OF HIS...

THE FIREPLACE HER MOTHER SAT WATCHING FOR SO MANY EVENINGS, PURRING GENTLY, CONTENTEDLY...

THE MEMORIES OF THE PARENTS HELENA WATCHED GO TO THEIR IMMORTAL REWARDS, NOT SO VERY LONG AGO.

CREAK

STILL, IT IS ALL HERE WAITING FOR HER. THE CLOCK SWINGS AWAY FROM THE WALL AT A TOUCH, AS THOUGH ITS MECHANISM HAD JUST BEEN OILED THE DAY BEFORE.

WHAT HER FATHER BUILT, HE BUILT TO LAST.

THE LONELY FOOTSTEPS ECHO DOWN THE STONE STAIRWAY. SHE WALKS THROUGH THE DARKNESS WITHOUT BREAKING STRIDE, SECURE IN HER FOOTING.

SHE HAS COME HOME.

HELENA WAYNE HAS COME BACK TO HER FATHER'S HOUSE.

7

THE NEXT EVENING, IN WHAT MAY BE CHARITABLY DESCRIBED AS ONE OF GOTHAM'S LESS-POSH NIGHTSPOTS...

ANOTHER ROUND, MANNY... THE BIG GUY'S THIRSTY, AND I WANNA MAKE SURE HE GETS EVERYTHING HE WANTS...

...EVERYTHING.

UGGG... ANIMALS. ANIMALS, THAT'S ALL THEY ARE! AND THE DARE CALL ME MAD!

HEE HEE HEE... WHAT INSANITY IT ALL IS!

LEADING OFF THE HEADLINES HERE AT WGNN IS A STRANGE REPORT FROM GOTHAM CITY!

ALTHOUGH LONG BELIEVED DEAD AND BURIED, THE BATMAN HAS BEEN SEEN SWINGING ABOUT THE CITY FOR THE PAST FEW HOURS!

AS WE GET MORE WORD ON THIS APPARENT RESURRECT--

HA HA HA!

I KNEW IT! HEE HEE HEE... I KNEW HE COULDN'T BE DEAD!

HA HA HA!

HE CAN'T BE DEAD-- HEE HEE HEE-- NOT UNTIL I KILL HIM! HA HA HA!

I KNEW IT!

GASP!

EEK!

THE JOKER!

THE JOKER WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH YET!

THE JOKER THINKS IT'S BATMAN. YOU THINK IT'S THE HUNTRESS DRESSED AS BATMAN. WE THINK YOU'RE BOTH WRONG.

BE HERE FOR... "LAST LAUGH"

8

DC
Wonder Woman
50¢
ALL NEW!
NO. 283
SEPT.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WHO... OR WHAT... IS THE DEADLY RED DRAGON!
THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN The HUNTRESS AND THE JOKER!
AND THIS TIME THEY'RE NOT ALONE!
NO! IT CAN'T BE HIM! HE'S DEAD!
IS HE...OR ISN'T HE? READ... SPECTER OF THE BAT!
PEREZ • GIORDANO
AND WILL THE AMAZON PRINCESS LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT?

HE'S THE **DEADLIEST LUNATIC** EVER TO STALK MADLY THROUGH THE STREETS OF **GOTHAM CITY**, AND THIS IS ONE OF HIS **HAPPIEST** MOMENTS. YOU SEE, HE'S JUST REALIZED THAT HE **STILL** HAS THE CHANCE TO **KILL** HIS ARCH-ENEMY. HE'S...

THE JOKER

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

I *KNEW* HE COULDN'T BE DEAD-- I JUST *KNEW* IT!

SHE'S **HELENA WAYNE**, AND SHE'S CARRYING ON A FAMILY TRADITION. HERE ON A WORLD SUBTLY **DIFFERENT** FROM OUR OWN, SHE SAW THE **BATMAN DIE**... AND FIGHTS ON AS HIS **DAUGHTER** SHOULD, BATTLING CRIME AS...

THE HUNTRESS

OR **DID** BATMAN DIE AT ALL?

HMMMM...

WELL, IF NOTHING *ELSE*, THIS SURE AS HECK WILL BRING THE *JOKER* CRAWLING OUT OF THE WOODWORK!

BATMAN BACK!

GOTHAM GAZETTE

by Andrew Vinson

NOW, THE MUSICAL QUESTION IS: WHICH ONE WILL HAVE THE...

...LAST LAUGH!

PAUL LEVITZ & JOE STATON *STORYTELLERS* • STEVE MITCHELL *EMBELLISHER* • ADRIENNE ROY *COLORIST* • BEN ODA *LETTERER* • LEN WEIN *EDITOR*

FUNNY HOW THINGS JUST FALL INTO PLACE *NATURALLY* SOMETIMES...

HERE I WAS, TYING MY STOMACH INTO *KNOTS* WORRYING ABOUT HOW I COULD GET *HOLD* OF THE JOKER--

--AND WHEN I *FINALLY* GET THE IDEA TO COME OUT HERE TO THE *OLD BATCAVE*, IT ALL COMES TOGETHER *ONE-TWO-THREE*.

WITH THE JOKER *CONVINCED* THAT DAD'S STILL *ALIVE*, HE'S SURE TO COME OUT OF HIDING AND DEVOTE ALL HIS EFFORTS TO FINDING "*DAD*."

THAT'LL KEEP EVERYONE *ELSE* RELATIVELY *SAFE* FROM THAT LOON, AND--

WHOOPS! LOOKS LIKE IT'S ALL COMIN' DOWN *FASTER* THAN I THOUGHT!

UNLESS THAT LITTLE *RED LIGHT* IS GLOWING BECAUSE A *CIRCUIT SHORTED* IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS OF *DISUSE*-- SOMEONE'S CALLING FOR A *BATMAN*.

AND THEY'RE GOING TO *GET* THEIR WISH...

...OR AT LEAST A *REASONABLE SUBSTITUTE* THEREFORE!

THE BAT-SIGNAL CUTS THROUGH THE NIGHT-DARK SKIES, FAMILIAR YET UNFAMILIAR, ONCE MORE A BEACON OF HOPE.

THOUGH THE BATMAN HAS BEEN SEEN, NO ONE CAN QUITE BRING HIMSELF TO BELIEVE HE LIVES.

THEN AGAIN, NO ONE HAD EVER QUITE BEEN ABLE TO BELIEVE HE DIED.

LEGENDS SIMPLY DON'T LIVE OR DIE LIKE MEN.

LAW FIRMS, ON THE OTHER HAND, DO.

DEAD. FLAT OUT, "GET THE COFFIN NAILED UP AND THE EARTH TURNED" DEAD.

THAT, MY ASSOCIATES, IS *EXACTLY* WHAT CRANSTON, GRAYSON AND WAYNE WILL BE IF THIS *LIBEL SUIT* SUCCEEDS.

AND AS THE AFORE-MENTIONED *CRANSTON*, I TAKE THAT QUITE *PERSONALLY*-- NOT TO MENTION MY REACTION TO THE *DISBARMENT* PROCEEDING BEING AIMED AT ME.

FOR REFERENCE, THE BOOKIE AT THE GOTHAM BAR ASSOCIATION IS TAKING *FIVE-TO-ONE* ODDS--*AGAINST* US.

THIS IS ALL BASED ON THE ALLEGATION THAT WE RELEASED *FALSE* CONSUMER INTEREST DATA, MISTER CRANSTON?

EXACTLY, TYLER.

AND IF ANY OF THE THREE OF YOU WANT *OUT* OF THE FIRM, *TELL* ME-- *BEFORE* THE BLOOD STARTS FLOWING.

BUT DON'T ANSWER ME *NOW*.

THINK ABOUT IT.

MEANWHILE, I'LL TRY TO FIND *HELENA*, AND TELL HER.

THEN WE CAN HAVE A NICE *LONG* TALK...

...AND IF WE GET *SMART*, MAYBE WE'LL END IT WITH A *SUICIDE PACT*.

EASY, ARTHUR.

HUNH?

RELAX, ARTHUR-- *I'LL* STAND BY YOU--YOU KNOW THAT. AND SO WILL *HELENA!*

BEFORE WE ESTABLISH THE IDENTITY OF THAT SOFT-SPOKEN YET CONFIDENT SHADOWY FIGURE, RAISE YOUR EYES AND SEE WHAT ARTHUR CRANSTON SEES AS HE LOOKS OUT INTO THE NIGHT:

THE BAT-SIGNAL.

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, IN THE YEARS GONE BY, IT HAD BURNED BRIGHT FROM ATOP POLICE HEADQUARTERS, SUMMONING ITS NAMESAKE...

...BUT TONIGHT THE MAN AT ITS CONTROLS IS DEFINITELY NOT A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE POLICEMAN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION...

HEE HEE HEE

THIS'LL DO IT! THIS *HAS* TO DO IT. HA HA HA!

IN ANOTHER MINUTE--MAYBE TWO-- I'LL *HAVE* HIM! HEE HEE!

JOKER, *FORGET IT.* YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE *BATMAN.*

YOU'RE NOT GETTING *ANYTHING*--

--EXCEPT A TICKET BACK TO *JAIL!*

HMMMPH!

I DON'T KNOW *WHO* YOU ARE, YOUNG LADY, BUT YOU'RE *VERY* AMUSING! HA HA HA!

WHY, IN FACT, YOU ALMOST BLOW ME--

THUNK

--DOWWWWWWW!

NOPE, NO *BLOW GUNS,* JOKER. *NO TOYS.*

4

YOU THINK I-- HA HA HA-- *NEED* THEM, DON'T YOU? HEE HEE HEE

YOU'RE EVER SO AMUSINGLY *WRONG!*

WHY, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR DELIGHTFUL *THEORY* TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY *HARRY SIMS!*

I HEAR THE LITTLE BATCH OF *VENOM* I MIXED UP IN PRISON STILL HAS *HIM* IN STITCHES!

THAT, MY CLOWN-FACED FRIEND, WAS A *MISTAKE!*

FOR A MINUTE I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE *BIG BAD MAN* I HEARD STORIES ABOUT WHEN I WAS *LITTLE--*

--BUT YOU JUST REMINDED ME OF EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF *SLIME* YOU REALLY ARE!

UMPHH

SLIME...? I BEG YOUR *PARDON,* MISSY!

UGHHHH

I AM A THIEF, A *MURDERER...*

...WHY, I'M EVEN *CHARMED* TO BE INTRODUCED AS A *HOMICIDAL MANIAC!*

BUT I AM DECIDEDLY *NOT* SLIME. HEE HEEE HEE

JOKER!

A SHAME, ACTUALLY--FOR I MUST BE TODDLING OFF.

OH, YOU'RE OFF ALL RIGHT, JOKER-- OFF TO JAIL!

YOU KNOW, YOU REALLY ARE QUITE DETERMINED.

I LIKE THAT.

HAVE NO FEAR, DEAR LADY-- THERE'S ANOTHER ROOF BELOW.

AHH... I SEE YOU FIGURED THAT OUT.

THUMP

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M EVEN MORE DETERMINED TO LEAVE YOU HOLDING THE BAG, AS IT WERE. HA HA HA

A BREAKAWAY JACKET!

EXACTLY, MY DEAR-- AND SO I BID YOU FAREWELL, FOR YOU ARE NOT WHO I WAS EXPECTING--

OF COURSE SHE'S NOT, JOKER.

WHA--??

I-IT'S TRUE--IT'S REALLY TRUE!

YOU ARE ALIVE!

YOU DID WAIT FOR ME TO KILL YOU! HA HA HA

YOU POOR DEMENTED IDIOT. YOU'RE NOT WORTH WAITING FOR.

I ONLY CAME TO WATCH.

6

HE'S ALL *YOURS*, HUNTRESS.

WHAM

HE'S *GONE*-- FADED RIGHT BACK INTO THE *SHADOWS*.

DOESN'T *MATTER*, THOUGH.

I HAVE WHAT *I* CAME FOR. WITH ANY LUCK THERE'LL BE A *SAMPLE* OF THE NEW *VENOM* THE JOKER'S BEEN USING IN ONE OF HIS *POCKETS*--

--AND THAT'LL BE *ENOUGH* TO PUT HARRY AND THE OTHERS ON THE ROAD TO *RECOVERY*.

AMAZING, ISN'T IT... WHEN YOU GET TO *THINKING* ABOUT IT? A CITY LIKE *GOTHAM* FILLED WITH *HAPPY*, *NORMAL* PEOPLE--

--PLUS ONE LUNATIC KILLER LIKE THE *JOKER*--

--AND A MAN LIKE *DAD*.

SHORTLY...

WHEW! DOES THAT FEEL *GOOD!* THAT *COSTUME* GETS TOO CLAMMY FOR WORDS ON A HOT NIGHT LIKE TONIGHT!

NOW IF ONLY GOTHAM CITY WILL STAY *CALM* FOR A FEW DAYS, SO I CAN CATCH UP ON MY *LAW JOURNALS!*

SKIP THE *READING,* HELENA-- YOU'VE GOT *BETTER* THINGS TO DO.

OH, SO *THERE* YOU ARE, MISTER *RICHARD GRAYSON!* I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D STOP BY TO SAY *HELLO* LIKE A DECENT *STEP-BROTHER!*

OKER
PTURED

WELL, AS BRUCE'S *WARD* I'M NOT EXACTLY YOUR *STEP-BROTHER*-- BUT THEN, PICKING THE *LOCK* WASN'T A *DECENT* WAY TO STOP BY, EITHER.

MAYBE *NOT,* DICK, BUT THANKS *ANYWAY*--FOR THE VISIT AND FOR *BEATING* ME TO THE IDEA OF LURING THE JOKER OUT BY *IMPERSONATING* DAD.

NO *SWEAT,* HELENA.

NOT TO PUT YOU *DOWN,* OF COURSE-- BUT IT WAS A LITTLE EASIER FOR *ME* TO DISGUISE MYSELF AS BATMAN.

I'M A LITTLE MORE BRUCE'S *BUILD,* Y'KNOW.

ANYHOW, THAT'S NOT *IMPORTANT* ANYMORE. I *REALLY* STOPPED BY TO ASK YOU IF YOU WANTED TO HELP SAVE ARTHUR CRANSTON'S *HIDE.*

WH-WHAT? WHAT'S *HAPPENED?*

ARTHUR CRANSTON ASKED ME TO COME BACK TO GOTHAM, AND WHEN I HEARD THE *JOKER* WAS LOOSE, I FIGURED YOU YOU COULD USE A *HAND.*

GRAB A *SEAT,* PIN UP YOUR *TOWEL* AND LET'S *TALK,* HEL. IT'S GONNA BE A *L-O-O-N-G* NIGHT!

NEXT:
TOGETHER AGAIN --FOR THE FIRST TIME! BE HERE!